

Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2011

Anthony Del Valle | THEATER REVIEW

OH WHAT A NIGHT! proves dramatic power of songs

BY ANTHONY DEL VALLE
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Oct. 26, 2011 | 2:00 a.m.
Updated: Oct. 26, 2011 | 9:05 a.m.

Sorry, can't resist: Oh, what a night "Oh What a Night!" is.

This collection of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons songs is exuberantly performed, excitingly sung and pumped with theatrical pizzazz.

The show differs from the celebrated "Jersey Boys" in that it's not, at heart, biographical. Director Michael Chapman put the songs front and center, and he's made certain he has a cast to do them justice.

These four dynamic performers all have an uncanny ability to glide without warning from deep voice to falsetto. They capture the spirit of these hits, which vary from nonsensical fun to poignant heartache. The performers act the numbers as strongly as they sing them.

They also have gigantic stage personalities, so that they are totally in command. You want to watch them. And you never feel they're working; they just seem to be having a great time. (And you can imagine what kind of hard work that takes.)

Choreographer Paul Holmquist heightens the musicality with broad, brazen, tongue-in-cheek movements that seem organic to the vocals.

The cast show remarkable discipline. They're always in sync, always strong in their execution of the smallest steps. And the way they handle the little things -- removing and replacing a mic from its stand, dancing with the stand, taking off their jackets -- suggest a veteran's knowledge of how to dominate a stage...

The production proves that a simple concert can make for uplifting theater when you have artists involved who understand the drama of songs.