

Theater & Such

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Friday, July 12, 2019

This "Hairspray" Has Bounce and Shine

Hairspray



Cassie Grilley and Company Photo: Ben Krantz Studio

Music by Marc Shaiman, lyrics by Scott Wittman and Marc Shaiman, book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan; based on the 1988 film of the same name by John Waters

Directed by Matthew McCoy

Bay Area Musicals
Victoria Theater, San Francisco

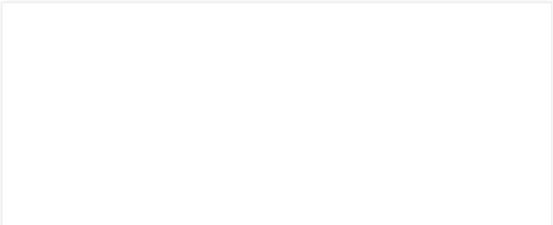
Until August 11, 2019

By *Christine Okon*

Long ago, my mother would take me to get a wash, set and styling for next to nothing at the local beauty school. The student would grab her can of Aqua Net hairspray as I squeezed my eyes shut and held my breath as the *ssshhhh* buzzed around my ears, and small sticky droplets hit my neck. Hairspray was the essential, bubblegum fix for the instant glamour of beehives, bouffants, and big hair.

Bay Area Musicals (BAM) has launched a high-powered, fun show with the musical **"Hairspray."** Under the direction of Matthew McCoy, BAM performers, in any show they put on, always exude commitment and enthusiasm, and this show is no different.

"Hairspray," set in 1962 when times were about to be a-changin', follows the sweet and "pleasingly plump" teenager Tracy Turnblad (a big-haired and bubbly Cassie Grilley) as she celebrates her life in Baltimore, "where every day is an open door," and dreams of meeting and marrying Link Larkin, the handsomest dancer on the Corry Collins (a slippery and suave Scott Taylor-Cole) after school dance show. Tracy and her best friend Penny Pingleton (a remarkably versatile Melissa Momboisse) squeal and wriggle as they watch the show on the small black and white television in the Turnblad living room. With her "radio and hairspray," Tracy can take on the world, which indeed she does.



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Dave J. Abrams and Company Photo: Ben Krantz Studio

This musical beats like the heart of a teenage girl dancing to songs, joys, challenges and triumphs. From beginning to end, the stage is full of action and surprises with dance numbers that keep on coming. You feel that sweet anticipation for the next 45 rpm to drop down the spindle rack and hit the turntable.

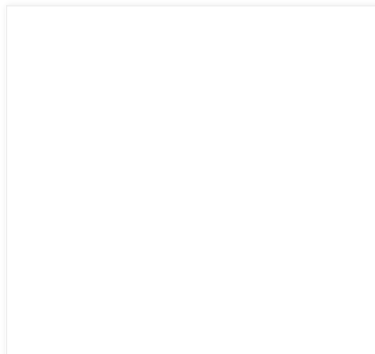
Jon Gallo and musicians adeptly travel the musical allusions that range from doo-wop, girl band, surf, and Trudy's favorite: rhythm and blues and soul, which Cory Collins plays once a week on "Negro Day" when local black kids take the floor. As lead dancer Seaweed J. Stubbs, Dave Abrams lights up the stage with his moves, flips and grinds in "Run and Tell That."



Sarah Sloan and Lauren Meyer Photo: Ben Krantz Studi

When Tracy asks innocently why Negroes can't dance *every* day with the white kids, she unveils the racism and snobbery of the show's producer Velma Von Tussle (Sarah Sloan) who, with her equally vacuous and pink-chiffon-dressed daughter Amber (Lauren Meyer), will stop at nothing to do the white, er, *right* thing to protect the status quo. It's as if she were using the show's sponsor "Ultra-Clutch Hairspray" to keep flyaway hair, times, behavior, rules and mores in place.

Tracy's eyes and consciousness are widened by Motormouth Maybelle (Elizabeth Jones), a "Big, Blonde and Beautiful" black woman in shimmering blue lame and sequins (cheers to costume designer Brooke Jennings). When Jones belts out "I Know Where I've Been," I felt as if I were at a leap-to-your-feet church celebration.



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Elizabeth Jones Photo: Ben Krantz

With “Welcome to the 60’s,” Tracy urges her mother Edna Turnblad, who has not left the house since 1951, to take chances. Scott DiLorenzo fills out Edna’s housedress adequately but needs to create a more convincing mother-daughter bond of affection.

Although the miking had problems opening night, BAM brings another fun night at the theater. When the audience leaps up to join the actors in the final number “You Can’t Stop the Beat,” everyone dances out the history lesson that teaches that for true change to happen, “just to sit still would be a sin.”

“Hairspray” by **Marc Shaiman, Scott Wittman, Mark O’Donnell and Thomas Meehan**, directed by **Matthew McCoy** of **Bay Area Musicals** at The Victoria Theatre, San Francisco, through Sunday, August 11, 2019. **Info:** bamsf.org

CAST

Cassie Grilley, Tracy Turnblad
Melissa Momboisse, Penny Pingleton
Scott DiLorenzo, Edna Turnblad
Kamren Mahaney, Link Larkin
Elizabeth Jones, Motormouth Maybelle
*Dave Abrams, Seaweed J. Stubbs
Kennedy Williams, Little Inez
Paul Plain, Wilbur Turnblad
Lauren Meyer, Amber Von Tussle
Sarah Sloan, Velma Von Tussle
Scott Taylor-Cole, Corny Collins
Bonnie Lafer, Prudy Pingleton/Others
Kim Larsen, Principal/Male Authority
Stephen Kanaski, Brad
Ronald James, Fender
Emma Sutherland, Brenda
Brendan Looney, Sketch
Claire Pearson, Tammy
Steven McCloud, I.Q.
Peli Naomi Woods, Detention Kid/Dynamite
Smita Patibanda, Detention Kid/Dynamite
Chanel Tilghman, Detention Kid/Dynamite
April Deutschle, Detention Kid
Carlos Carrillo, Detention Kid
Zoe Hodge, Detention Kid
Ajay Prater, Detention Kid

*Appears courtesy of Actor’s Equity Association

ARTISTIC TEAM

Matthew McCoy, Director/Choreographer
Jon Gallo, Musical Director
Leslie Waggoner, Assnt. Choreographer
Cat Knight, Stage Manager

Andie Fanelli, Assnt. Stage Manager
Lynn Grant, Set Designer
Brooke Jennings, Costume Designer
Eric Johnson, Lighting Designer
Anton Hedman, Sound Engineer
Jackie Dennis, Wig Designer
Matthew McCoy/Cat Knight, Prop Designers
Richard Gutierrez, Wardrobe Master
Stewart Lyle, Technical Director

ORCHESTRA

Sonja Lindsay, Trumpet
William Berg, Woodwinds
Adam Hughes, Guitar
Kyle Wong, Bass
Dominic Moisant, Drums
Jon Gallo, Keyboard/Conductor

at [July 12, 2019](#)

Reactions: [funny \(0\)](#) [interesting \(0\)](#) [cool \(0\)](#)

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