

San Antonio Express- News

Music & Stage

'Grease' is the word at The Playhouse-San Antonio

By Deborah Martin

July 22, 2015



The opening number of "Grease," playing at The Playhouse-San Antonio, has guys and gals giving very different versions of a summer encounter. (photo: Siggie Ragnar)

For "Grease" fans, the most important thing to know about The Playhouse-San Antonio's staging — other than the fact that it's a blast to watch — is that there will be a sing-along on Aug. 8.

Even without that element, the show is dance-in-your-seat fun from start to finish.

Directed by Tony Ciaravino, the musical traces the unlikely romance between tough guy Danny Zuko (Chris Berry), the head of the T-birds street gang, and too-sweet-for-words new girl Sandy

Dumbrowski (Reagan Wilson). Berry and Wilson have strong chemistry, and their transformations are fun to watch. Berry is particularly entertaining in the scene in which he takes a smoke break during a track meet, and Wilson nails the famed finale.

The show also gives most of the characters in the couple's orbit a chance to shine in solo numbers, an opportunity that the actors grab and run with. Trevor Chauvin does a great job with "Those Magic Changes"; James R. Welch is sweet and funny in "Mooning"; Paige Berry rules in "Freddy, My Love"; and Carlye Elyse Gossen makes "There Are Worse Things I Could Do" her own.

The big ensemble numbers — including "Summer Nights," "We Go Together" and "Born to Hand-Jive" — are well-staged, powered by Courtnie Mercer's energetic choreography.

And the band, led by Andrew Hendley, rocks through the score.

MVP honors go to Cody J. Wilson, who stepped into the role of T-bird Sonny just a few hours before showtime opening night when another actor fell ill. Wilson delivered a fully realized performance, nailing the songs and choreography as well as the dialogue. Grant Bryan shares in that, because he, too, was drafted last minute to fill in for Wilson as the Teen Angel, and did a stellar job, too.

"Grease" can be seen at 8 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays through Aug. 16 at The Playhouse San Antonio, San Pedro Park at Ashby. Tickets range from \$12 to \$30 at theplayhousesa.org or by calling 210-733-7258.