
Matt Alfano, left, plays Danny in the musical blockbuster 'Grease' that will take the stage at the Chemainus Theatre this summer, while Quinn Cartwright, right, plays the part of Sandy. (Robert Barron/Citizen)

Review: 'Grease' brings summer fun, nostalgia to Chemainus Theatre

The production is anchored by fine performances and excellent musical numbers

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Summer fun has come to the Chemainus Theatre

Festival in the form of classic musical *Grease*, which is sure to be a hit with audiences looking for a little nostalgia and a lot of great music.

The production is anchored by fine performances and excellent musical numbers that highlight both the vocal and dance skills of the cast.

Matt Alfano as lead Danny Zuko shows off his dancing chops as the charming bad boy that good girl Sandy (Quinn Cartwright) sets her romantic sights on.

Cartwright hits the right notes of sweet and sassy, foreshadowing her eventual transformation, giving the happy ending to this opposites attract pairing. Their attempt to turn a summer romance into a more long-lasting relationship back in the real world of friends and

expectations is the central storyline of the show and thanks to the likeable performances of the leads we are rooting for them to make it work.

The supporting cast is where this show really proves a must-see, with standout performances from a number of the actors.

First and foremost is a seething portrait of Sandy's female foil, the worldly, cynical and sometimes downright mean Betty Rizzo, brought to life in spectacular fashion by Kaleigh Gorka, who leads the social clique Sandy hovers around the edges of. But thanks to Gorka's performance, Rizzo is also vulnerable and sympathetic. Her final solo is a showstopper that earned some of the most enthusiastic applause of the night, and a big round of applause for Gorka when the cast took their bows.

Two of the best voices in the cast belong to Steffanie Davis as Pink Lady Jan, and Kevin McLachlan who does double duty as greaser Roger and imaginary Teen Angel.

Perennial Chemainus Theatre favourite Sarah Carlé is also excellent in her dual role of aspiring beautician Frenchy and the forbidding teacher Miss Lynch.

On opening night the musical numbers started with a bang and then just got more confident and impressive as the night went on. There have been musicals at the

Chemainus Theatre before with great sound, but one of the things that stands out in this production is the choreography and dance. It gives the group numbers high energy and a lot of colour. Choreographer Julie Tomaino and assistant choreographer Lyndsey Britten have managed to do a lot on the relatively small Chemainus Theatre stage.

All your favourite songs are here, including 'Greased Lightning', 'We Go Together', and 'You're the One That I Want'. The ensemble doesn't disappoint for those who have heard these pieces before.

Grease runs from June 8 to Sept. 1. For tickets check out chemainustheatre.ca or call the box office at 1-800-565-7738.