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In My Humble Opinion

by Jonathan Fox

Memories

Lighting “the corners of my mind,” the memories washed over me last week as I had lunch with the gang at the Forestburgh Playhouse (FBplayhouse.com) and shared stories about what it was like to be one of the original “Kids from Fame” in the 1980s.

As I fielded questions from the stage, I couldn’t help but ask myself: was it really “all so simple then—or has time rewritten every line?” Almost all of the lines have been rewritten for the new stage version of the show, currently running at the playhouse. When Phoenix Toliver (who wows ‘em in the number “Mabel’s Prayer”) asked me what it was like to actually be alive in 1982, when “Fame” takes place, I had to pause, reflect and consider “the smiles we left behind.”

The kids did a bang-up job with material which bears little resemblance to the original, and it would appear that the names have been changed (to protect the innocent?) but I enjoyed my little trip down memory lane nonetheless. Having toured the country in “Fiddler on the Roof” (as the tailor Motel Kamzoil) I am reminded that “what’s too painful to remember” (male diva star Topol) “we simply choose to forget” as I look forward to the upcoming Forestburgh Playhouse’s interpretation of its next show.

As I took my seat opening night for the Sullivan County Dramatic Workshop’s (SCDW, scdw.net) new production of “Little Shop of Horrors,” another question arose: “If we had a chance to do it all again, tell me, would we? Could we?” I played Seymour in “Little Shop” light years ago, so once again I was reminded that “memories may be beautiful and yet... “

I must say, I was pleased with the production overall. The Howard Ashman/Alan Menken musical was a smash back in the day (and I was, too... humble, no?) and the SCDW did them proud. Direction, sets and casting were spot-on and a special shout-out is due to the wildly entertaining Abby Smassanow (as Audrey), Scott M. Eckers (as Seymour) and Edwin Ramirez (Audrey II puppeteer) ,who helped to pull this successful production together.

It was great to see the Rivoli Theatre in South Fallsburg, NY packed to the rafters. The entire cast lit up the well-designed production, and I would encourage audiences to catch the show, which plays through the 15th of this month.

Speaking of “scattered pictures,” there were no “misty watercolors” in sight at the gorgeous Hanson Gallery (thehansongallery.com) in Honesdale PA, but there were many stunning fantasy and surrealism images on display as I met with gallery hosts Lars and Cynthia, making my way through the crowd and chatting with artists Luis Pontone, Nancy Wells, Jeff George, Charles Gregory Woods and Hana Gorman, all of whom had beautiful work on hand to discuss.

As I wandered through the ultra-cool “Decorium” that adjoins the gallery, I found



TRR photo by Jonathan Fox

The cast of “Fame” belts out a number at the Forestburgh Playhouse, in Forestburgh, NY, where the show plays through Sunday, August 15. (Click for larger version)



TRR photo by Jonathan Fox

“Harvester,” created by artist Jeff George, had the crowd abuzz at the Hanson Gallery in Honesdale, PA (Click for larger version)



TRR photo by Jonathan Fox

A plethora of pyrotechnics lit up the Mongaup Valley over the weekend, “just for the fun of it,” courtesy of the Swinging Bridge Homeowners Association. (Click for larger version)

myself involved in bits of fascinating conversation about art, life, love and desire and had a few laughs with the local talented (IMHO) denizens of the gallery. The art lovers came out in throngs and the local color of the community was in full swing as we gathered, shared some stories and created new memories together, which "we will remember," regardless of how old the kids at Forestburgh must think I am.

Exhausted from the stimulating events of the week, I snaked my way over the mountains and through the woods toward home, momentarily forgetting there was still more to come. As I passed the Swinging Bridge Marina, located at 371 Starlight Road in the Mongaup Valley (what we call home), the sky lit up with a pyrotechnic display that forced me to pull off the road and snap over one hundred photos of glorious fireworks that the homeowners association puts on display every year, long after the fourth of July.

The upcoming week promises to be action- packed once again, as I make out my schedule and plan trips to the Catskill Art Society (catskillartsociety.org) to see more puppets (yay!) on Saturday, and figure out a way to sneak in a visit to both the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance (artsalliancesite.org) and the River Gallery (rivergalleryny.com) in Narrowsburg, NY to make more memories, for it's those untold future experiences that "we'll remember, whenever we remember, the way we were."

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