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The Pajama Game: Down to earth or off the wall?

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One of the most beloved musical comedies, "The Pajama Game," has been revived again and again at every level since it made its debut over six decades ago.

It is currently running at the Theatre By The Bay in Bay Terrace, 13-00 209th St.

On one level it is joyous celebration of down-to-earth workplace friendship and affection. On another level it is an off-the-wall mirror of uncomfortable situations in the 1950s. Students of history remember serene days watching our president "Ike" play golf while a disturbing undercurrent of suspicion and change stirred at many levels.

Let's see. As the curtain opens, there's rank and file at the textile factory. They are just regular folks. They say what they mean and mean what they say. Fine. Then there's the attractive head of the grievance committee, Babe Williams (played by lovely Michele Mazzocco). She literally lives on the wrong side of the tracks with her pop, an engineer. She falls in love with, of all people, Sid Sorokin (Scott Eckers), one of the upper level management people—generally considered enemies by unions of that era.

What happens next? In the midst of this romance, the factory workers start a slow down, start damaging merchandise and threatening to strike. Nice. Babe has to stand by her union brethren. There goes the romance. Close curtain for Act I.

Wait. The noble union members have some personality issues as well. The union's president, affectionately known as Prez, tends to forget his wedding vows as he chases every smocked sewing operator at the factory. By the way, this is a musical.

There are some rallies. Some clandestine meetings at the neighborhood saloon. More meetings. A 7 ½ cent raise. Reconciliation.

So, is this just a feel good musical comedy from the 1950s, starring Doris Day (in the movie) as the girl next door? Or should we dig a little deeper and realize there is more than just a little bit of sociological satire and criticism?

This is a tough one. Let's hear your opinion.

The Queens Courier

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