

RDU on Stage

Full Theater Coverage in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill

[Podcast](#) [Reviews](#) [Videos](#) [Behind-the-Scenes Tour](#) [Who We Are](#) ▾

[Contact](#)

MAY 2, 2019

Review: Temple Theatre's 'Grease' is a Blast from the Past

By Lauren Van Hemert

Last month it was announced that a prequel to *Grease* is in the works. That is a testament to the longevity of this show. Let's face it, for me and my entire generation, *Grease* was our *High School Musical* and revisiting Rydell feels like a throwback to a simpler time.

Danny and Sandy have a whirlwind summer romance. Sandy ends up at the same high school as Danny and long story short, boy and girl meet, break up, and wop-bop-a-loo-bop their way back together.

Now I'm not going to pretend that there aren't inherent problems with *Grease*, nor am I going to make any kind of sociopolitical commentary on the show, as has been done time and time again in response to the movie's 40th Anniversary last year. What I will say is the youthful energy radiating from the cast in The Temple Theatre Company production is infectious.

The Pink Ladies are led by Brianna Mooney (Betty Rizzo) and Taylor Kraft (Marty). Kraft is one of the stronger dancers in the show and has her spotlight moment during *Freddy, My Love*. Mooney spends the better part of the show skulking around the stage, but her talents are really showcased during her big solo *There Are Worse Things I Could Do*. Meg Young's Sandy is pretty in pink and she holds her own during *Hopelessly Devoted to You*, but overall, her character, not the performer, is so problematic and whiny, she feels like more of a footnote in this production than its star.

But this production is all about the boys. Danny, played by a very charismatic Alex Yost, and his gang of T-Birds, dreamily played by Colin Kane (Doody), Kevin Gilmond (Roger), Patrick Hoft (Sonny) and Seth Hoyle (Kenickie), hands-down steal this show. From Kane's pining rendition of *Those Magic Changes* to Yost's forlorn performance of *Alone at the Drive-In Movie* to the T-Birds' big showstopper *Greased Lightnin'*, this gaggle of guys, who are frankly more *Jersey Boys* than *Grease*, sell this sock-hop from start to finish.

Notable too is Lynda Clark's portrayal of schoolmarm Miss Lynch, which is spot-on perfect. She wields her whistle and sets the tone of the show even before the curtain rises.

Director Jacob Toth's meticulous direction feels like it's part of some elaborate game plan. Part coach (I imagine), part choreographer, Toth efficiently maneuvers the large ensemble cast on, off, and across the stage and keeps the show moving at a brisk pace. Here there is certainly strength in numbers, and the big moments like *Born to Hand-Jive* and *We Go Together* feel quite grand and will not disappoint.

Audiences sitting in the balcony may have an obstructed view of some scenes.

In addition, fans of the movie need to understand that the stage show, which predates the movie, doesn't follow the movie's timeline.

If you dissect the undercurrents of *Grease* through a contemporary lens, the themes could be problematic and disturbing. But if you can appreciate that the focus of this production is on the friendships formed, the compromises made, the lessons learned, and of course the music, then this is one joyride worth taking (if you can find tickets).

Grease runs through May 12th at Temple Theatre in Sanford. For more information visit: <http://templeshow.com/>.

Share this:



Like this:



Be the first to like this.

LAUREN VAN HEMERT REVIEWS



Published by Lauren Van Hemert