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What does it cost to be kind? - 'Carrie: The Musical'

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(photo courtesy of Some Theatre Company/Elaine Bard)

Some Theatre Company presents musical adaptation of King classic

ORONO - Modern, bloody, edgy and not for the faint of heart, Some Theatre Company's production of "Carrie: The Musical" is not just a performance but an experience - one that should not be missed.

Based on the famous Stephen King 1974 horror novel and 1976 movie of the same name, "Carrie: The Musical" - with music by Michael Gore, lyrics by Dean Pitchford and book by Lawrence D. Cohen - tells a tale of what happens when high school bullying goes

horribly wrong.

Carrie White (Sylvia Baxter) is a misfit. At school, she's an outcast who's bullied by the popular crowd and virtually invisible to everyone else. At home, she's at the mercy of a loving but cruelly overprotective mother (Kari Stowe). But everything changes when Carrie discovers she's got a special power ... and when pushed too far, she's not afraid to use it.

"Carrie: The Musical" is an immersive experience, superbly directed by Elaine Bard with crisp musical direction from Jason Wilkes. From the moment the audience walks into the Keith Anderson Community House, they enter Carrie's world. Audience members are inches away from the action and in some scenes part of the story. This is a kind of theater experience that theatergoers have likely never experienced before.

Throughout the show, Baxter nails a powerhouse rendering as misfit protagonist Carrie White. Baxter becomes instantly relatable thanks to her character's clear and sad desire for acceptance. That need is shown in her opening scene and solo "Carrie." Her character's transition throughout the show is stupendous. Baxter's last song - titled "Destruction" - will send shivers of pure terror down your spine.

Stowe is hair-raisingly spectacular as Margaret White, Carrie's mother. Stowe grabs the audience's attention with her powerful operatic voice and disturbing religious devotion. Stowe's duet with Baxter on "I Remember How Those Boys Could Dance" features beautiful harmonies while also being immensely frightening.

As the show narrator, Mikayla Burrige gives a magnificent performance as compassionate student Sue Snell. Burrige makes a puritan character that could turn excessively sweet in less talented hands into a consciously conflicted character. Her solo "Once You See" is a touching performance in Act I.

Robert Brangwynne is entirely wholesome as Sue's boyfriend Tommy Ross. Brangwynne's smooth and honeyed voice paired with Burrige's as they duetted on "You Shine" in Act II; the number put a smile on every audience member's face.

Nichole Sparlin gives a captivatingly evil display as Chris, the spoiled, conceited student who torments Carrie and quickly becomes the character the audience loves to hate. Sparlin also exhibits some fantastically seductive dance moves along the way.

The choreography - courtesy of Becca Tinkham - is fluid and eye-catching. When was the last time you saw a song and dance about the slaughtering of a pig? You'll definitely see one in "Carrie: The Musical." And every full-cast dance number provides astonishing imagery while still looking slightly treacherous and disorienting.

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The ensemble features Daniel J. Legere, Erryn Bard, Natasha Clement, Nicolette Aliano, Logan Bard, Quinn Bard and Juno Buendia - all of whom contribute mightily and significantly to the overall production.

It should be made clear that none of these astounding performances would be possible without the phenomenal technical effects, lighting and set design by Elaine Bard and Gerry Bard. The eerie gym backdrop creates a horror movie vibe and the lighting effects in creepy shades of red and various patterns complete the effect. Without revealing too much, the technical effects during the climax of the show are realistically startling and well worth the price of admission alone.

(Also, it’s worth noting that every audience member is entered into a raffle to win a copy of the novel “Carrie” - one signed by author Stephen King himself.)

Prepare yourself for a night filled with thrills, chills and spills when you attend Some Theatre Company’s production of “Carrie: The Musical.” The show runs through November 12 at the Keith Anderson Community House, located at 19 Bennoch Road in Orono. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at sometheatrecompany.com.

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