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Some Kind of Wonderful

by Michael Martin
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A premier musical production entitled, **Some Kind of Wonderful**, has just opened at the Florida Stage theatre in Manalapan, Florida and plays through August 30th.

The show, billed as a theatrical concert for the summer, celebrates the influential styles of popular song in the first half of the 1960's.

Created by Bill Castellino and Christopher McGovern, the same team responsible for last season's original musical, *Cagney*, the nostalgic piece pays homage to some of the era's most acclaimed individual artists (Sam Cooke, Patsy Cline, Neil Sedaka, Frank Sinatra) and groups



alike (The Supremes, The Four Seasons, The Drifters).

The weakly written patter between the hit songs serves little purpose other than to offer an evocative glance at a time in our nation's history when music, though certainly more innocent in tone than that of today, also began to push certain social envelope boundaries (Elvis Presley, The Beatles).

The multi-talented cast of five singers (Irene Adjan, Eric Collins, Dana Dawson, Michelle Pereira, and Barry J. Tarallo) is the glue that keeps this piece together, and is ultimately responsible for the evening's success.

Together, during group numbers, the cast creates an amazing blend of harmonies that soar. Individually, each performer takes turn in spotlighting their particular musical nuance.

Collins' amazing tenor shines brightest in a tender rendering of *He Will Break Your Heart*, a song made famous originally by Jerry Butler.

Adjan carries the biggest through-line of the languid script with repeat appearances by a quirky teenage character that offers some comic relief, but best gets to display her vocal talents in the Patsy Cline classic, *Crazy*.

Dawson's ability to riff probably best suits the more pop sound of the early rock-n-roll numbers, but also beautifully entrances during a lilting rendition of *At Last*, most associated with Etta James.

Tarallo, who impressively accompanies throughout the show on guitar, also boasts his lyrical tenor musicality while crooning *The Girl From Ipanema*, popularized by the great Frank Sinatra.

However, the evening's most captivating performance stems from the alluring talents of Pereira. Her passionate rendition of The Coasters' *Besame Mucho* seduces from start to finish, and foretells of an amorous manner the actress utilizes to deliver her song interpretations throughout.

The on-stage four-piece band (Christopher McGovern - piano, Jason Curry - Reeds, Neel Shukla - Percussion, and Rupert Ziawinski - Bass) excels in creating the authenticity of

the time period, and Matt Kelly's sound design compliments by equally balancing the fusion of powerful vocals and booming instruments.

Overall, **Some Kind of Wonderful** provides a sentimental musical journey that proves most enjoyable thanks to the splendid efforts and melodious artistry of the entertainers themselves.

www.floridastage.org for further information.

Michael Martin has been an active member of Actors' Equity for over 20 years. As a professional actor, he has toured many parts of the US and the world. Originally from St. Louis, he now resides in Miami.

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