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# New musical takes swing at rituals surrounding golf



Jack Helbig On theater  
Posted Thursday, March 02, 2006

I've seen musicals about cats, about baseball, about women who quilt, about phantoms of the opera, and about the Vietnam War. But I've never seen a musical about golf. At least I hadn't until

Sunday, when I caught the premiere of "Fairways," by local authors Mary Hutchings Reed (book and lyrics) and Curt Powell (book).

"Fairways," currently running at the Steel Beam Theatre in St. Charles, is all about golf. The show starts with an opening number set in the remote past, when Scotsmen invented the game. Then it jumps ahead nearly a thousand years to an unnamed golf course somewhere in the United States. At that golf course, two young neophytes, one male and one female, are shown the basics of golf. Or rather they are sung them. Eventually the two meet up and what happens after that is pure musical theater.

I don't want to make it sound like the show revolves around these two crazy kids. It doesn't. The show is too tightly focused on everything golf to be about anything else.

That's a good thing. And a bad thing. The good thing is that audiences that love golf get and appreciate the authors' golf humor. The bad thing is that for those of us who do not live, breathe and play golf this show can at times be almost baffling, especially when the songs and story poke fun at golf rituals.

The performances in the show, directed by Donna Steele, are generally good to great, with a couple of outstanding actors tossed into the mix.

Jamie Ellis raises the roof on a real the bluesy number, "Leader Board Blues," and Helen Buck manages to turn her few minutes on the stage into memorable ones.

It takes a lot of guts for a small theater like Steel Beam to try out an untried musical. Judging by the SRO crowd they attracted Sunday, though, there is an audience for brand new musicals.

Here is hoping "Fairways" does well enough to inspire the folks at Steel Beam to try another. Maybe next time someone will write a show about Rac-quetball.

• "Fairways" runs through March 9 at Steel Beam, 111. W. Main Street, St. Charles. . . out of four. Rating: family friendly. Plenty of free parking. For tickets and reservations, call (630) 587-8521.

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