

Fairways' sinks a hole in one on stage



Photo provided

Steel Beam Theatre's golf-based musical "Fairways" concludes its run on Sunday.

By JILL ORR

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All theater groups excel at something. Some produce a stunning drama, others a hysterical comedy. The Steel Beam Theatre in St. Charles always has excelled in performing musicals, and their current production of "Fairways" is no exception.

The production is a solid gold nugget that sparkles and shines in all of its many facets. The play is written by two Illinois residents.

Mary Hutchings Reed wrote the script and Curt Powell composed the music. The two form an impressive team and have created a musical that is funny and thought provoking. The fact that this is the world premiere only adds to its lustre.

The play revolves around life, love and golf. That's right, golf! The play begins more than 500 years ago on the Scottish moors, where a group of Scottish fisherman are hitting pebbles with sticks on their way home from fishing. A pebble lands in a rabbit hole, someone bets a pint of beer that no one can do that again and the rest is history.

The play then moves forward to a golf course on modern

times where we find Kathy O'Neill being coerced into playing the game by her mother, Betsy. Betsy wants to win the mother/daughter golf tournament against her nemesis on the course, Nancy Woods. Nancy has an unfair advantage since her daughter, Joan, plays golf and Kathy has never swung a club. Nearby Sam Mackay is asking his father to teach him the game of golf overnight. He is an MBA and his boss has asked him to join a foursome with one of their clients on Monday.

If Sam learns the game, he also will be able to play with his girlfriend, Joan Woods. Sam and Kathy both receive lessons and start learning the fine art of the game, including its unique vocabulary and etiquette. The two struggle to learn the sport and experience some successes and some failures. In the end, they fall in love and are married.

"Fairways" is a light-hearted romp that sets the audiences feet tapping. All of the numbers reflect a certain musical style-everything from rap to the blues to a show-stopping soft shoe number. The cast is a blend of ages and experience. They sink their guts into every moment of the show and bring down the house more than once

"Fairways"

WHEN: 8 p.m. today, Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday

WHERE: Steel Beam Theatre, 111 W. Main St., St. Charles

TICKETS: \$25

INFORMATION: (630) 587-8521 or www.steelbeamtheatre.com

with their talent and enthusiasm. Each cast member has a moment where they shine, but Andrea Malarsky (Betsy O'Neill), Dana Teichart (Nancy Woods), David Prentiss (Pro), Julie Bayer (Kathy O'Neill) and Steve Wright (Sam Mackay) all give exceptional performances.

Chris Billquist (Caddy) is a promising young talent who delivers lines and belts out his songs like a seasoned professional. He steals more than one scene that he is in.

The choreography by Annette Thomann is simple but effective.

The only flaw with this show is that it closes this weekend, and there are very few tickets left. The show either needs to be extended or be brought back in a future season.

Showtimes are 8 p.m. today and Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday.

For information, call (630) 587-8521.