



A Story Told Laughing

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by Pat Rogers

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Sag Harbor, NY

It's a good thing "Enter Laughing" has a sense of a humor.

The coming of age story about a young actor and his first possible break into "the big time" has been bounced around a bit.



"Enter Laughing, The Musical." Courtesy of Bay Street Theatre.

Inspired by memoir, the story's been told through a novel, a play, a movie and two different musicals with varying audience reactions.

If this wasn't enough, the current incarnation had to pause while Hurricane Irene visited The Hamptons.

Luckily, the electricity is back and so is Bay Street Theatre.

"Enter Laughing, The Musical" resumed last night to kick off its final week of performances. A few extra matinees were added to replace shows that were cancelled. After Sunday night, the next entrance may be on Broadway.

Ultimately, the reason the story keeps cropping up is because it's a good one. The story gets its start from Carl Reiner's life. Set in the 1930s in the Bronx, the comedy springs from the ping pong match between a young man's desire to become an actor and his parent's wishes for him to become a pharmacist. They'd also like him to stop dating so many girls and get married.

Another reason for the staying power of "Enter Laughing," is the star power it draws. At Bay Street, the line-up reunites, on stage, the married couple Jill Eikenberry and Michael Tucker. They previously appeared together in the television hit, LA Law. Sharing the stage are Richard Kind ("The Producers," Sly Fox, Scrubs"), Josh Grisetti ("Broadway Bound") and Kate Shindle ("Wonderland").



"Enter Laughing, The Musical." Courtesy of Bay Street Theatre.

Having a Hamptons “preview” for a potential Broadway run feels like being part of the insider’s circle. The production was changed and updated after its run at the York Theatre Company in NYC this spring. Director Stuart Ross tweaked dialogue and scenes for the benefit of audience laughter, he said. The musical line-up at Bay Street includes a number not performed recently.

Audience reactions will be gauged and this version assessed before its Broadway debut, said Ross.

Eikenberry’s role as the Jewish mother has been fine tuned since the part’s debut at with the York Theatre Company. Her part has been portrayed in various lights and renditions, including being dropped so the dad could be the heavy.

At the New York Theatre Company, Eikenberry felt like she was fighting for the life of mother’s role. Now secured, Eikenberry said she spent time developing the character further into a nuanced presentation. Having most of the cast move from NYC to Sag Harbor allows for the cast to continue developing the intimate dynamics so the musical reaches for its pinnacle.



“Enter Laughing, The Musical.” Courtesy of
Bay Street Theatre.

So far, “Enter Laughing, The Musical” gained a reputation as a side-splitting musical where smiles abound. Jerry Seinfeld’s reaction was “You an’t pack more laughs and fun into a finite space and time than “Enter Laughing, The Musical,” according the Bay Street Theatre.

The story is a classic tale that’s bound to have audiences laughing, said Ross

Bay Street brought the musical aboard to bring joy to punctuate the end of summer, said Murphy Davis, an artistic director for Bay Street Theatre. Whether the musical makes it to Broadway or not, being part of the story’s development trajectory was another draw for Bay Street.



“Enter Laughing, The
Musical.” Courtesy of
Bay Street Theatre.

Basic Facts: “Enter Laughing, The Musical” will be performed Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and at 7 p.m. on Sunday. Matinees will be performed on Wednesday at 2 p.m.; Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. The final performance will be held on Sept. 4.

The musical’s book is written by Joseph Stein (“Fiddler on the Roof,” “Zorba”) with music and lyrics by Stan Daniels (“The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” “Taxi.”). “Enter Laughing, The Musical” cast also includes Paul Binotto, Betsy DiLellio, Ray DeMattis Erick Devine, Eric Mann, Gerry McIntyre, Gina Milo and Emily Shoolin.

Carl Reiner wrote the semi-autobiographical novel on which the musical is based. “Enter Laughing,

The Musical” is the final Mainstage production of Bay Street’s 2011 season.

For tickets, call the Bay Street Theatre Box Office at 631-725-9500 or visit www.baystreet.org. Tickets are \$65 - \$75.

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