

## **Drury Lane show has magical mix of music, comedy**

**By Vic Hyde**

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A Little Night Music, Drury Lane Theatrical Productions' presentation at The Loft is, as I heard someone remark during intermission, "a different sort of show."

With music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Hugh Wheeler, that difference shows up early as the cast offers Night Waltz and a trio of complementary songs Now, Soon and Later.

They introduce what's to come in this clever, elegant, period piece that blends high emotion with comedy, mostly the romantic kind, but sometimes even approaching farce.

It has elements of musical comedy but with music all in three-quarter time or variations thereof, this story of newly found and rekindled love, scandalous affairs and sexual tension leans toward operetta, even opera.

The plot revolves around middle-aged Fredrik (Bill Everett), in an 11-month, still unconsummated marriage with 18 year old Anne (Carolyn Campbell). Fredrick's son Henrik (James Pettit) is enamored with his stepmother but has more than a passing relationship with the maid, Petra (Nina Wallace).

Fredrik re-ignites his passion for an old flame, actress Desiree (Ariel Rogers), whose lover Carl Magnus (Stephen Higgins) is married to Charlotte (Maureen Dwyer).

They all come together at the home of Desiree's aging mother (Marilyn Alex) and Desiree's young daughter (Mary Katherine Mines).

Throughout, a group of Greek chorus-like singers (Janet McGhee, Carrie Mines, May Farquhar and Lyla Miklos along with Paul Morse, Ryan Starkweather and Owen Stanford) offer musical comments and commentary.

The required Sondheim style is there in full measure in this Drury Lane version that brings together a number of essential theatrical elements, starting with imaginative direction by Gary Smith and Willard Boudreau.

To that is added an excellent cast, full of people who can act and sing very well, elegant costuming, fine musical accompaniment and innovation in moving people and furnishings around the very small stage to create seamless continuity.

A Little Night Music is full of well-executed musical offerings such as You Must Meet My Wife, Liaisons, In Praise of Women, A Weekend in the Country, The Miller's Son and of course Send in the Clowns. Everything comes together for a musically and lyrically satisfying whole for those who like a "different sort of show."

The show continues until Nov. 25 (905-637-3979).