

'Cinderella' shines like a slipper, thanks to wickedly funny villains

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Dec 07, 2011

StarAdvertiser.com

By John Berger

Anemone Jones is beautiful, sweet and charming in the title role, but as always it's the comic antics of the three villains and the well-meaning king that take the story over the top as Diamond Head Theatre celebrates the holiday season with Rodgers & Hammerstein's made-for-television musical, "Cinderella."

'CINDERELLA'

>> Where: Diamond Head Theatre, 520 Makapuu Ave.

>> When: 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 3 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, and 4 p.m. Sundays, through Dec. 18. Also, 7 p.m. Dec. 19 to 23.

>> Cost: \$12 to \$42

>> Info: 733-0274 or www.diamondheadtheatre.com

This is the third time in recent memory that DHT has presented this child-friendly musical. And it is once again perfect family entertainment.

DHT veteran Lisa Konove, a comic sparkplug in DHT's 1999 and 2006 productions, works her magic for the third time playing the nasty stepmother. Kathryn Mariko Lee (Portia) and Jody Bill (Joy) are a delightful duo as the shallow, self-centered stepsisters.

The sisters' cartoonish bickering fuels most of the humor, and Lee and Bill play up those comic nuances throughout. "Stepsisters' Lament" is a fine showcase for them. The lengthy scene with Jones and Konove in Act III — "When You're Driving Through Moonlight" and "A Lovely Night" — is another.

The climactic scene when all three try to get their foot into the glass slipper is the comic highlight of the show.

Daniel James Kunkel plays the well-meaning and slightly henpecked king in a performance more loose-jointed and comical than when he played the same role in 2006. The heightened visual elements work well.

Jones is a wonderful find as the heroine. Her first vocal number, "In My Own Little Corner," introduces her as a star-caliber vocalist, and she lives up to expectations with each scene and every song thereafter.

Charles Mukaida in the pivotal role of the prince succeeds in playing the character as cerebral in the early scenes and then as a young man befuddled by unfamiliar emotions in his scenes with Jones.

He also meets the challenges posed by "Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful? — Reprise," the number in which the Prince and his mother ponder the differences between love and infatuation, reality and illusion.

Karen G. Wolfe (costume design) has dialed back the garishness of the stepsisters' costumes. Portia and Joy still have some hurt-the-eyes couture, but their ballgowns don't have the visual punch they could have had.

Anyone looking for G-rated musical entertainment can count on DHT's latest production of "Cinderella."

Copyright (c) Honolulu Star-Advertiser