

## Oh Boy: "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story," at the Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse through March 8

Written by Thom White

Monday, 20 January 2014 06:00

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Friday's performance of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* at the Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse left me wanting more – specifically, more of Kiarri Andrews' and Nina Waters' Apollo singers and Collin O'Connor's Ritchie Valens. Andrews and Waters brought some much-needed energy to the first act, adding attention-worthy moxie and a whole lot of fun to their one scene. (Waters' character also sparkles, literally, with the help of costume designer Gregory Hiatt's gorgeous pink column gown with watteau train.) Meanwhile, O'Connor, with his suave demeanor and smooth pelvic gyrations, whet my appetite for a Ritchie Valens musical, if for no other reason than to see the actor enjoy more stage moments as the singer.

Sadly, though, these three characters have limited time in playwrights Alan Janes' and Rob Bettinson's presentation. Even sadder is that the parts featuring Andrews, Waters, and O'Connor are more interesting than the rest of the show. A significant part of the problem with the piece is that Janes and Bettinson fail to find an appropriate balance between biographical story and musical revue. Both acts detail Buddy's life story, taking us from the young rocker rebelliously performing rock & roll on his local country-music station to Buddy's death in an airplane accident. However, while both acts begin with a bit of Buddy's story, they also descend into a string of Buddy's hit songs without much storyline included. This flow, or lack thereof, renders the musical incongruous and, for me, boring. I believe *Buddy* would be significantly better if Janes and Bettinson found a way to weave the artist's songs together *with* his life story, rather than switching back and forth from biography to revue. (However, this show's Buddy & the Crickets do perform the songs well.)

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