

David Gauci and Davine Productions  
***Beautiful, The Carole King Musical***

Reviewed by Helen Karakulak. Adelaide Theatre Guide. July 8, 2021

Davine Productions have a hit on their hands with “Beautiful: The Carole King Musical”. Carole King’s long-running career is impressive to say the least, penning not only her own successful hits like, “It’s Too Late” and “I Feel the Earth Move” but classics performed by other artists such as “The Locomotion” and “Will You Love Me Tomorrow”. This Jukebox musical follows King’s journey from an ambitious teen to an empowered woman who became one of the most influential songwriters of the 20th century.

To say Jemma McCulloch is brilliant as Carole is an understatement. McCulloch’s dynamic characterisation and stand-out sultry vocals embodies an earthiness and authenticity that makes this production shine.

Trevor Anderson delivers an energetic performance in the role of Carole’s husband, Gerry Goffin, who is the catalyst of their increasingly turbulent relationship. Anderson starts strong as the charismatic university student Carole meets at just 16 years old, with an understated charm and clear chemistry with McCulloch when their characters relationship is at its peak. However, Anderson’s outbursts seem restrained as Gerry eventually unravels under pressure, chasing other women and the evolving sounds of the 60s and 70s.

Maya Miller is delightful as Cynthia Weil. The relationship between Carole and Cynthia is an enjoyable watch as the two remain bubbly towards each other despite their competitive nature. Joshua Kerr is a hilariously sincere Barry Mann, Cynthia’s songwriter partner. Kerr’s delivery of Barry’s dialogue is sure to garner some laughs, as he has an adoring disposition you can’t help but root for in a love interest. All vocalists are strong, but the pairings of these leads blend especially well together.

While some moments could have used some polishing, for the most part the ensemble cast is energetic, and each get a chance to shine in various star-studded supporting roles. These include Neil Sedaka (Jordan Coulter), The Shirelles (Alisa James, Sisilina Saukuru and Nicky TszTung Li) and The Drifters (Dominic Saukuru, John Saukuru, Ron Abelita, Sebastian Mendoza-

Giannotti and Raffael Raschella). Choreography by Shenayde Wilkinson-Sarti is simple, expressive and, paired with Louise Watkins and Renee Brice's colourful and era-appropriate costumes, creates a dynamic, fun viewing.

The Star Theatre's stage is extremely well-utilised with a clever set design. The band and larger musical numbers are incorporated upstage while most of the action downstage is accompanied by projections on screens to each side that presented various set backdrops, such as recording studios, or the home.

The Beautiful band and musical direction of Peter Johns is sure to have you bopping along in your seat to the many chart-topping hits Carole King's discography boasts. If you were fortunate enough to grab tickets before they sold out for the season, you won't be disappointed.