

Dracula Baby leaves audience begging for more musicals

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"This is the first musical NPSS has tackled in many long years, and I hope it sets a precedent."

That was part of the message director Daniel Vecchio included on the programs handed out at all the performances of the NPSS DramaZone production, Dracula Baby; and if this play is any indication of the quality we can expect in the future, it should set a very good precedent.

The musical send-up of Bram Stoker's Gothic novel of horror about the infamous vampire was very enjoyable.

By the time the second act was just a few minutes old, my cheeks were aching from the permanent smile which had become fixed upon my face from the opening curtain.

The play parallels the Stoker novel fairly closely, with one major exception: the nurse who works for Dr. Seward in the sanitarium next to Dracula's Carfax Castle falls for the vampire and all sorts of complications arise.

The performances of all the leads were so good, it's difficult to single out any one part for praise.

Lowell Constable's Dracula was terribly Transylvanian and sufficiently sinister, in the tongue-in-cheek style which the play requires.

His interplay with the audience ("What do you expect for \$7 — good jokes?") was a highlight of the play.

Nadra Burns, the sanitarium nurse which falls for the count played her role to the hilt, bumping and grinding her way around the stage in a Mae West manner which continually brought laughter from the

audience.

Jason Brekkaas was a convincing Renfield the kook ("I'm not hard of hearing, I'm just insane!").

Holly Kirkpatrick was a demure and lovely Lucy, the ward of Dr. Seward; her fiancée, Arthur, was played by Chris Bender, who was more than convincing as a wimpy, not-really-deserving suitor.

Van Helsing, the professor who is brought in to destroy Dracula, was played by Michael Kurschat; he demonstrated both a good singing voice and good ability to stumble around as the klutzy, absent-minded professor.

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NOW THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT



DRACULA: (Lowell Constable) puts Lucy (Holly Kirkpatrick) under his spell during Dracula Baby's first act. NPSS DramaZone will be performing the play again this weekend. (PHOTO BY JOHN GEARY)

Wes Webster had a difficult role as the play's straight man, Dr. Seward, but he also put in a decent performance.

The chorus of gypsies, barmaids, pub patrons and monsters also have to be commended for their part in the play.

One of their number — Teresa Ritchie — also gave an extremely entertaining performance as a witch who helps Dracula choose between Lucy and the nurse.

Musically, the hard work by both the leads and the chorus were evident.

Kudos should go to musical directors Patricia Humphries and Dawn Friesen for putting this aspect of the production together so well.

If there were any mistakes made by either the singers or pianist Patricia Lindsay, it was very difficult to

tell.

The numbers were humorous and musically sound, and kept the audience entertained, which is the whole idea.

All in all, it was a very good evening's worth of entertainment; if you haven't already seen the play, you'd better hop, or as a bat would, "flap" to it and buy some tickets. The play runs tonight and Saturday, with tomorrow's performance the final one.

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