

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER Review: Disco's Still Hot at THEATRE THREE

by Steve Parks May 23, 2017

Disco is dead, we're told. But you wouldn't know it from the spring-summer Long Island theater season and the current national tour of "Saturday Night Fever" — 20-somethings dancing to the Bee Gees like it's 1977.

Just weeks after Tony and Stephanie walked off-stage arm in arm at Theatre Three, another Tony and Stephanie will strut their stuff at CM Performing Arts' Noel Ruiz Theatre for a mid-summer's run. But for now, it's all about Rachel Greenblatt as Stephanie Mangano and Bobby Peterson as Tony Manero in the role that, along with Danny Zuko in "Grease," made John Travolta a star.

Peterson may not be headed for Hollywood anytime soon, but he may be headed for bigger stage roles, following appearances at the Engeman Theater in "Jekyll & Hyde" and "Memphis," "Tonight at 8:30" at Guild Hall and now this lead at Theatre Three, directed with vigor by Jeffrey Sanzel.

Matching him step for step, note for note, is Greenblatt as Stephanie, Tony's dance partner in the \$1,000-cash-prize contest at 2001 Odyssey, a 1970s-and-'80s Brooklyn club that rivaled more famous ones in Manhattan. Tony and Stephanie are both from Italian immigrant families in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, where the greatest landmark is not actually over land: The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge plays a dramatic part in "Fever." Meanwhile, Stephanie is so determined to get out that she becomes a Manhattan snob even before moving there.

Tony works in a paint store and hangs out with buddies whose chief pastime is getting drunk and ogling girls. Mostly, they're just "Stayin' Alive" and "Jive Talkin'."

They all live for Saturday nights — especially



Tony, unofficial local disco dance king. Annette (a game Beth Whitford), his wannabe girlfriend, wears her heart on her sleeve, if not in her dance shoes. Bobby (Mike Fales) has a steady girl, played cloyingly — for good reason — by Emily Gates. Romantic disappointment and complications lead to a reckless tragedy. But the dance contest must go on. More Bee Gees ensue, including the sexy "How Deep Is Your Love" and "More Than a Woman," featuring dancers in flashy costumes by Ronald Green III.

Jeffrey Hoffman's orchestra accompanies the large dance ensemble to Whitney Stones' precise choreography. Randall Parsons re-creates both the dance club and looming bridge architecture through his indoor-outdoor set.

At the encore, you'll be encouraged to dance in the aisles. No cash prize.

WHAT "Saturday Night Fever"

WHEN | WHERE Through June 24. Upcoming: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday (no performance Sunday) at Theatre Three, 412 Main St., Port Jefferson