



Capstone Theatricals presents

XANADU

THE SURPRISE HIT
BROADWAY MUSICAL

About Capstone Theatricals...

In 2004, a group of people who had served as staff members of various touring theatre companies got together and talked about their experiences with those theatres. They discussed what they perceived were the strengths and weaknesses of each theatre and what they would do differently, "if they ran the place." Although they didn't know it at the time, it was out of this meeting that Capstone Theatricals was born.

Capstone Theatricals is dedicated to providing high quality theatre at an affordable cost. But, equally as important as what the audience sees on stage, this company values the relationship that the staff of each venue has with us. Capstone Theatricals is dedicated to making your working relationship with us as pleasant as possible. We recognize that each venue is unique with its own personality and that the people who work in the space every day know it better than anyone. We view our relationship with each venue as a partnership. Therefore, we seek the advice and counsel of the people who know the space the best.

With everything we do in regards to mounting and publicizing the show, we want to focus on what we can do for you (rather than what we cannot). For example, if your local news-paper wants a phone interview with a cast member, we will make it happen. If you want a television interview with a cast member once we get in town, we will make every effort to see that its done. If you need to make special arrangements with loading the show into the venue, just let us know and if it is at all feasible, we will do it. If you want a meet-and-greet following a performance, say the word and you've got it. Our job is to help you fill the house and to make your overall experience with us pleasant. We will do whatever it takes to make both a reality. Never hesitate to ask us to do those extra things that can add so much...we're glad to do it. It's our job!

As we said, we want to create a partnership with each of our venues. That's why we will seek your advice on ways to make our programming and services better for you. At the end of each of our visits, we will ask you to evaluate our production, staff and supporting materials. Our aim is to make sure that you are completely satisfied with our production and our services.

A lot of production companies provide good programming and want the overall experience to be pleasant...the Capstone Theatricals difference is that we make it a priority!

About Xanadu

It is 1980, and chalk artist Sonny Malone is dissatisfied with his sidewalk mural of the Greek Muses (daughters of Zeus) and determines to kill himself. On Mount Olympus, Clio (pronounced "Kleye-o"), the youngest, perkiest Muse, convinces her eight sisters (two of whom are men in drag), to travel to Venice Beach (rising out of the sidewalk mural) to inspire Sonny ("I'm Alive"). Zeus's rules require that Muses must always be disguised from mortals. Clio has the idea to wear roller skates, leg warmers, and sport an Australian accent, and the other muses agree. Clio changes her name to something contemporary: "Kira". Quickly inspired ("Magic"), Sonny decides that he can combine all the arts and "something athletic" all into one spectacular entertainment: a roller disco.

Two of Clio's sisters, Melpomene (the oldest sister) and Calliope, are jealous that Clio (although the youngest) is the leader of the Muses and that Zeus had promised "Xanadu" to Clio, although no one knows exactly what that entails ("Evil Woman"). So they plot to discredit Clio and cause her banishment by tricking her into breaking one of Zeus's rules: a Muse must not fall in love with a mortal, so they will curse "Kira" and Sonny to fall in love.

Meanwhile, Sonny finds a good location for the roller disco, a long-abandoned theater in the Fairfax district of Los Angeles called "Xanadu." "Kira" inspires him to locate the owner in the phone book ("Suddenly"), and they set up a meeting with real estate mogul Danny Maguire, who used to be a big band clarinetist before he started in the real estate game.

Sonny visits hard-hearted Danny in his posh office in downtown Los Angeles and tries to convince him to donate the theater for the roller disco, because it would bring the arts to the Fairfax district and drive up real estate values. But Danny scoffs, even though he had plans to open the theater himself, once upon a time. As Sonny leaves, "Kira" arrives, jogging Danny's memories of an old love and dance partner of his, who looked suspiciously like "Kira," named Kitty ("Whenever You're Away from Me"). Kitty tells Danny that although he had let his greed stop him from pursuing his dream to open the theater 35 years ago, he has a chance to redeem himself now by opening the roller disco with Sonny. Danny finds Sonny and tells him that if he can get the disco up and running in one day, he'll give him 25% of the take from the Disco ("Dancin"). Excited, Sonny readily agrees.

Sonny finds "Kira" and tells her the good news. She is not impressed with the deal that he has cut. It is then that the evil sisters work their curse, and the winged Eros, along with "Mama Cupid", shoots "Kira" and Sonny with the arrows of love ("Strange Magic"). "Kira" is soon overwhelmed with guilt over her loving feelings and of having created her own art (a hand-drawn picture) alongside Sonny – both violations of Zeus's restrictions on the Muses.

With the help of some of the muses, "Kira" and Sonny fix up the old theater ("All Over the World"), and Danny agrees to go ahead with the opening. Clio realizes that she is falling in love with Sonny and tells him that she must leave ("Don't Walk Away"). But the evil sisters are not finished. Now they offer Danny piles of money if he will tear down the theater and build condos. Danny can't resist and tells Sonny that the deal is off.

"Kira" comes back to tell Sonny that she loves him, but the evil sisters tell her that she has broken Zeus's rules, and that she must tell Sonny the truth. So "Kira" reveals all to Sonny, including that her name is Clio, but he does not believe her and is upset. He suggests that she is a crackpot. He also doubts that she really loves him, and she is angry and hurt ("Fool"). The evil sisters have triumphed ("The Fall"), and Kira sets off for Mount Olympus to receive her punishment from Zeus ("Suspended in Time").

More about Xanadu

Back on Mount Olympus, Zeus's wives ask him to take pity on Clio ("Have You Never Been Mellow"). Thetis retells the story of Achilles and his vulnerable heel. All the demi-gods and demi-goddesses are so afflicted. This gives Clio an epiphany: She, too, is invulnerable, except for her heels, but when the evil sisters had her shot with the arrows of love, she had been wearing the "mighty legwarmers," and so she must have been completely invulnerable. This means that she really did love Sonny! Meanwhile, Sonny and Danny discuss "Kira" and after seeing her in the sky, it all makes sense. Danny tells Sonny not Kira then declares her love for Sonny and rips off her legwarmers ("I'm Free") and attempts to fly away with Pegasus and Sonny, before Zeus pulls them down with copper chains. Sonny brashly declares that he would even fight Zeus for the woman he loves. Zeus, impressed with his pluck, decides to pardon Clio. The two evil sisters are displeased, the lovers are reunited, and Zeus reveals what Xanadu is: "True love and the ability to create and share art." Clio and Sonny go back to L.A. and Xanadu ("Xanadu").

Musical numbers:

"I'm Alive" – Clio/Kira and the Muses

"Magic" – Kira

"Evil Woman"– Melpomene, Calliope and the Sirens

"Suddenly" – Kira and Sonny

"Whenever You're Away From Me" – Danny and Kira

"Dancin'" – Danny, Sonny and the Muses

"Strange Magic" – Melpomene, Calliope and Kira

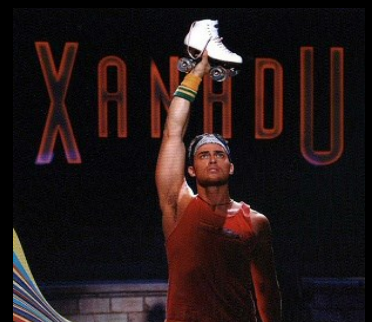
"All Over the World" – Sonny, Danny and the Muses

"Don't Walk Away" – Sonny, Danny and the Muses

"Fool" – Kira and the Muses

"The Fall" – Sonny and the Muses

"Suspended in Time" – Kira and Sonny





Heaven on Wheels, and in Leg Warmers

By CHARLES ISHERWOOD

Can a musical be simultaneously indefensible and irresistible? Why, yes it can. Witness “Xanadu,” the outlandishly enjoyable stage spoof of the outrageously bad movie from 1980 about a painter and his muse who find love at a roller disco in Los Angeles.

The title doesn’t ring a bell? Let me refresh your memory. In “Xanadu” did Newton-John a blooming film career destroy. (Sorry, Mr. Coleridge, I couldn’t resist.)

You probably remember how Olivia Newton-John, the pert, wholesome pop thrush, rocketed to film stardom opposite John Travolta in the Hollywood version of the musical “Grease.” That was in 1978. A mere two years later she roller-skated into oblivion — or at least back to Australia — in a fabulously insipid turkey called “Xanadu,” which didn’t do much for Gene Kelly’s career, either. “Xanadu” also helped kill the “Grease”-born movie musical revival right quick, and the film now resides, I trust, under toxic lockdown at Netflix shipping centers across the country. Watch it at your peril.

Why, you may wonder, would anyone deem it necessary, or even worthwhile, to pay lavish mock homage to a dreadful movie by exhuming it for exhibition onstage? Has Broadway nothing better to do? Has the American musical theater reached such a nadir of inspiration?

Well, yeah. I guess. Whatever. Why pester me with silly questions when there’s so much silly bliss to be had at the Helen Hayes Theater, where the new, improved “Xanadu” opened last night? In any case, Douglas Carter Beane, the impish playwright who has ingeniously adapted the screenplay for the stage (while wearing a Hazmat suit, I hope), trumps such hectoring queries by acknowledging the inanity of the enterprise himself. In his adorably ditzzy new book for the musical, Mr. Beane posits 1980, the year “Xanadu” dawned and the year in which the stage version is set, as a cultural turning point. “The muses are in retreat,” muses the god Zeus, played by Tony Roberts, in the musical’s poignant climax. (Kidding!) “Creativity shall remain stymied for decades. The theater? They’ll just take some stinkeroo movie or some songwriter’s catalog, throw it onstage and call it a show.”

Prophetic words, mighty Zeus, but the creators and performers of “Xanadu” desecrate the theater with such sharp good humor and magnetic high spirits that you won’t have much time to weep for the cultural blight that too much of Broadway has become. And in fact, there is enough first-rate stage talent rolling around in “Xanadu” to power a season of wholly new, old-school, non-jukebox musicals, if someone would get around to writing a few good ones.

Clio-Kira sheds her inspirational light on a frustrated young would-be artist named Sonny, who spends his time making chalk murals on the sidewalk by the shore. Sonny has chalk for brains, too, and Cheyenne Jackson, the star of “All Shook Up,” the forgettable Elvis jukebox musical, plays him beautifully as a big slab of prime beefcake in tube socks and denim cutoffs. Sonny’s twinkling blue eyes have all the depth of a kiddie pool, his earnest effusions the hilarious aridity of soap-opera acting. (Mr. Jackson is a last-minute and temporary substitute for James Carpinello, star of the forgettable stage ripoff of “Saturday Night Fever,” who was injured in a skating accident and will return to the role when he heals.)

Working from a screenplay consisting of atrocious musical numbers Scotch-taped together with doltish dialogue, Mr. Beane filled the gaps by dreaming up tasty shtick for two of Clio’s wicked sister muses, Calliope and Melpomene, who are played by the stage-devouring comic actresses Jackie Hoffman and Mary Testa, respectively. Their theme song, “Evil Woman,” is a highlight, as Ms. Hoffman, in her cat eyeglasses looking like a Roz Chast cartoon sprung to life, scats the shrieky guitar riffs while Ms. Testa bellows the chorus in chesty tones. Together or separately, they are both criminally funny.

Perhaps you remember “Evil Woman,” a hit for the not-quite-immortal ’70s synth-rock outfit Electric Light Orchestra. (A clue: Sing the first syllable twice.) If you were at least tween-age in 1980 and in possession of a radio, you will probably recognize a big chunk of the pop score for “Xanadu,” which includes the sultry ballad “Magic” and the pulsating title tune, written (like “Evil Woman”) by Jeff Lynne, the songwriter for E.L.O.

Back in the day, these were the kind of songs that you’d scoff at in public but crank up and sing along with in the privacy of your Camaro. Now, thanks to our metastasizing cultural affection for the drek of yesteryear (one day theses will be written about that seminal work “Mamma Mia!”), we are free to celebrate them in collective public rituals, as long as everyone agrees to keep tongues in cheeks.

“Xanadu,” which has mostly been directed at roller-derby speed by Christopher Ashley, does have a few dead spots in its brisk 90-minute running time. In addition to Zeus, Mr. Roberts plays the Gene Kelly role from the movie, a magnate named Danny Maguire who bankrolls Sonny’s disco dreams.

A few dozen audience members are seated onstage, but this device, used effectively in “Spring Awakening,” seems less an aesthetic choice than an economic one here. With a cast of just 10 and minimal sets (the designer David Gallo seems to have blown much of the budget on disco balls), “Xanadu” uses these onstage viewers as unpaid extras and space-filling, mildly animated scenery.

I can imagine, though, that members of the movie’s cult following, amateur cultural archaeologists of all things ’80s, would thrill to the prospect of being magically spirited into the swirling center of a beloved period artifact.

“This is like children’s theater for 40-year-old gay people!” cracks Ms. Hoffman’s Calliope at one point, and she (or rather Mr. Beane) is only half-kidding. But that acidic epithet could be used to describe far too many more earnest Broadway duds of recent vintage. At least “Xanadu” is in on the joke. The show’s winking attitude toward its own aesthetic abjectness can be summed up thus: If you can’t beat ’em, slap on some roller skates and join ’em.



THE NEW YORKER

Chasing The Muse “*Xanadu*” on Broadway

BY HILTON ALS

Xanadu” (at the Helen Hayes) is so ridiculously brilliant, so lavish and sublime a confection that any set of adjectives you might come up with after a single viewing will more than likely be replaced by another set of ineffectual adjectives once you’ve seen the show a second or third time. It’s probably the most fun you’ll have on Broadway this season, one reason being that everything about it is so resolutely anti-Broadway. In its wildness and ecstasy, “Xanadu” is a welcome relief from the synthetic creations that some Broadway producers have been peddling for years. Here you can’t count the disco balls fast enough—not to mention the roller skates, the frosted-pink lips, and the glittering spandex that the director, Christopher Ashley, hurls at you like a PCP flashback. “Xanadu” is far sleazier and cheesier than conventional musical theatre, and it points out just how tame most other musicals are.

A bit of background: The current show was inspired by the 1980 movie musical of the same name. The film starred the Australian pop sensation Olivia Newton-John as a Greek muse who materializes out of a mural painted on a wall in Venice, California, and befriends an artist called Sonny. She names herself Kira (as befits a Los Angeles-loving, roller-skating muse), and inspires Sonny to quit his day job as a commercial artist in order to follow his passion. The two join forces with a rich older patron (played in the film by Gene Kelly, and onstage by the always fine Tony Roberts), and open a roller disco called Xanadu. At last, Sonny becomes the man he has always meant to be: a straight guy who loves costumes, disco, and lights.

The film version of “Xanadu” is largely forgettable, and is generally regarded as a nail in the coffin of the American movie musical. But the film’s songs—which were written by Jeff Lynne and John Farrar, and which Ashley reprises—linger on, especially for those of us who are children of the disco era. Out of the film’s wreckage, a number of synthesizer-heavy tracks, laced with Newton-John’s breathy vocals, emerged as hits, “Xanadu,” “Suddenly,” and “Magic” among them. These were the songs you might have listened to on your Walkman while pogo-ing over to your drug dealer’s.

When, last year, it was announced that Ashley and Douglas Carter Beane were planning to mount a Broadway version of the movie, potential investors scoffed: why not leave that turkey in the oven? Beane, especially, was considered mad for undertaking the project. He was coming off a bona-fide hit, last year’s “The Little Dog Laughed,” a somewhat obvious satire about the perils of fame. What could he possibly have to gain from trying to improve “Xanadu”’s hopelessly leaden script?

As it turns out, Beane was the ideal playwright to adapt this work for the stage. In the film, which is slow and trippy, Sonny spends much more time in pursuit of his muse than is good for him, or us. Beane has retained the film’s basic plot, but he streamlined its action and transformed its lazy camp into something more intelligently suggestive. (He kept almost no dialogue from the original script.) Everything that made “The Little Dog Laughed” feel strident or too blunt is sharpened in “Xanadu.” As Kira, Kerry Butler is a powerhouse, ethereal and daffy at once. She not only imitates, which is to say exaggerates, Newton-John’s accent; she stands outside the entire role and shrugs. She’s both an ironist and an innocent—a little like a blond Lucille Ball—and an arresting believer in true love.

We trust Butler when she falls for Sonny (the excellent Cheyenne Jackson), even though he’s about as deep as a cartoon character. Jackson plays Sonny with a Horatio Alger-like grin, which widens when, near the end of the show, he gets to flaunt his long legs in hot pants. Though the story traffics in purely heterosexual confusion, intimations of a more closeted sexuality abound. Mary Testa and Jackie Hoffman, both exceptional, play Melpomene and Calliope, Kira’s fellow-muses and ugly sisters; they are the perfect stand-ins for every form of stunted lasciviousness. Why should Sonny and Kira be happy when Melpomene and Calliope have no hunk to call their own? Naturally, the girls try to break up Sonny and his girl. But love and disco triumph in the end. Don’t they always?

Why book a show from Capstone Theatricals?

There are more reasons than just getting a great show.

A common statement we hear when talking to prospective bookers is, "Wow that sounds really reasonable. Can your shows be really good at those prices?" We respond with a resounding "absolutely!" We recognize, even though the economy appears to be improving, we can't break you in order for you to have a great show. Therefore we have created a new way of doing business that benefits all of us. We want to bring our shows to as many people as possible and we want to work within your budgets. But, more than just that, we believe by working together with your venue and your colleagues we can provide quality entertainment that truly is affordable.

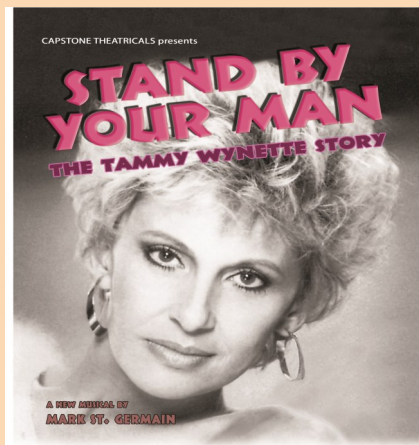
Here are some of the things we do to make the process of booking shows easier and more cost effective

- **Since we book our own shows, there is no agent commission** - and the result is lower prices for you. When a show works through an agent there is usually a 20% mark up in bringing you that show. The show then passes that cost along to you. We don't feel that we could, in good conscience ask you to pay for the privilege of buying our shows.
- **Since we book our own shows, we naturally are able to give you complete and accurate information about them** – we found when we were working with agents, they had only the basic information about the shows and would many times give information that was incorrect. We want you to be able to call us or email us with your questions and know you will get the right answer – the first time.
- **We are the only theatre to travel with a children's show, which we offer at half-price when you book one of our full-scale productions.** We travel with two children's shows which can be performed on the day of your show, on prior or subsequent day , or on a mutually convenient day. This can save you on your load-in cost, but it will definitely bring you a children's production at a phenomenal rate.
- **If you provide our lodging...** One thing we find incredible is there are many organizations out there who treat the money saved by a venue providing lodging as "found money." We don't think that way; we can't think that way. If you provide our full ask and provide lodging we give an adjustment in your price of our engagement (no matter whether the rooms are paid for, donated, or traded for a sponsorship.) If you pay less than the full ask, we will pro-rate your deduction.
- **Legitimate "Amway" - Help us book our tour...** We have a program that will not only help us fill our calendar, but will help you get your show at a greatly reduced fee, possibly even for free. How do you do this? Simply talk to your friends and colleagues and say you have booked a show with Capstone Theatricals and they should too. If they call and say you or your organization suggested they book we will discount your fee by up to \$1,000 per additional venue. Obviously, should the other venue cancel we will have to bill for the extra savings. These venues can be anywhere in North America and they don't even have to be the same show you booked. You can also book our other shows, in the same season and get up to \$1,000.00 off your combined booking. Book more than two and get even more off.
- **So, how do we know you are any good? ...** The first thing we do is associate with the people who made the shows great in the first place. These can be the original producers, directors, creators, performers, choreographers, etc. or a combination of all of these. We believe that by doing this we are able to start at a really great place and then, hopefully improve upon that... We hold casting calls, in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and anywhere that we can find the very best talent available. Sometimes they are even in our own back yard.

So, how else do we know you are any good? Don't take our word for it. Take the word of one of our loyal presenters.

"It is truly a joy to work with Capstone Theatricals from beginning to end. Not only does the company go out of their way to ensure a successful show, the artistic quality is A+. Thank you and we hope to have you back." -

Ruby Quinn, Robson Performing Arts Center, Claremore, Oklahoma.



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Don't forget to check out our other shows

