



IDA COUNTY'S OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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A Night To Remember

By Christine Wiese

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The Clausen Center in Holstein is about as far away from the theatre district in New York City as any off-Broadway musical is ever likely to get. Yet that's exactly what we got as an early Valentine last Saturday night.

Snowy roads and a dropping thermometer may have thinned out the crowd but not its enthusiastic response to "Embraceable You". Dean and Lisa Ferguson Balkwill assisted by four purveyors of syncopation blew the breath of life back into post-war Paris. 1948 never sounded so great.

The setting for this remarkable enterprise was comprised of a suitcase (train station); a rack of clothes and a table (dressing room); a table, piano, drums, sax, and bass (Club Mystique); a chair and a lamp (hotel room); a blanket and a basket (park picnic). The songs were Gershwin - George and Ira. The plot was as old as time itself. Wide eyed innocent boy meets beautiful girl; love blooms; cultures clash; boy loses girl. Boy renounces the past and (Voila!) boy gets girl. What a memorable way to meld all this gorgeous music into one unforgettable whole.

It's easy to see this duo loves what they do. They are thoroughly engaged in their stage performance and they certainly have the talent. They sing; they dance; they act with aplomb. Their self assurance and joie de vivre were apparent from the opening strains of "I Got Rhythm" to the closing refrain of "Embraceable You".

There were so many highlights of the evening's entertainment that it would be folly to try to list them all; however, a few deserve special attention. Lisa's rendition of "The Man I Love" was as the poets put it, beauty unadorned. It was sweet and poignant and touchingly sung.

The instrumentalists, who are artistes in their own right, went happily day tripping into "Fascinating Rhythm" and drew waves of applause.

"They All Laughed" performed by Dean was especially notable. The lyrics tumbled out of his mouth with the joyous abandon of a man in the throes of a brand new emotion. As his initial high wore off, the words slowed and then stopped as he nodded off in his easy chair. Hokey? Not a bit. His interpretation was real and true and the audience knew it. He spoke right to the human condition - it was a masterful stroke.

"Our Love Is Here To Stay" was just plain fun. She stuffed grapes in his mouth faster than he could chew and he mumbled sweet nothings into his half full wine glass. The sort of things lovers do when they're so happy they're goofy.

It was a wonderful show. It's nice to go New York and walk down Broadway but who needs to pay those prices when performers of this caliber come to Holstein? Once again - kudos to the Clausens and the G-H Foundation for bringing them here.



ALKAHEST ARTISTS  ATTRACTIONS

"EMBRACEABLE YOU, THE MUSIC OF GEORGE GERSHWIN"