

Rockin' Around the Clock to the tunes from those fabulous '50s!

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In Cajun Louisiana, they would say "*laissez les bon temps rouler*" but here on the Treasure Coast of Florida, "let the good times roll" says it all.

And what better way to celebrate good times than with Theatre-Go-Round (TGR) Dinner Theatre's new show of the same name which performs on Sundays Nov. 6, 13, 20; Jan. 22 and 29; Feb. 12, 14 and 19 at the Quilted Giraffe Restaurant at 500 South U.S. 1 in Vero Beach.

Jon Putzke's TGR recently premiered "Let the Good Times Roll" to a sold-out audience who wildly enjoyed a rock and rolling show of hits that recaptures the essence and sound of the 1950s era. By show's end, audience calls of "encore, encore" and "we've got all night" unquestionably proved that this show evokes as much fun as Dick Clark's "American Bandstand."

The fun-filled production also premiered new enhancements made by TGR officials. There is a stunning new elevated performance stage with more technically sophisticated lighting and sound to bring a new level of professionalism to the live performances as well as a rich new color scheme on stage of deep blue accented by white.

TGR is also becoming quite a family affair with Putzke grandchildren Grace and Tyler assuming new sound and lighting duties as well as new '50's era black and pink costuming by Jon Putzke's wife Marg.

Family ties apply to cast members as well with husband and wife singers Greg and Caitlin Harris sharing the stage with fellow cast veterans Beth McKenzie-Shestak (who has choreographed perhaps her best show ever) and singers Shamara Turner and Brendan Wenger.

Proud patriarch Jon Putzke noted that he has customarily employed a musically-inclined student from the Vero Beach High School's band department to perform sound technician duties and knew that Grace - daughter of Brandon Putzke, recently-named associate band director at VBHS - had the know-how.

"It was just a natural to ask her. It is very critical in our situation that the sound technician is musically trained. They have to "feel" the rhythms and be sensitive to the balance between the orchestra and the singer," Putzke said.

Not to be upstaged by his sister, Tyler offered to handle important lighting duties this year.

According to Putzke, “Let the Good Times Roll” was a famous hit song recorded in 1956 by Shirley and Lee which reflected an upbeat, post-World War II vibe. Surprisingly, perhaps, the song is not included in the show for reasons Putzke explained.

“It appropriately highlighted the general attitude of the country by mid-decade. The war was over, prosperity reigned and it was the best of times. However, the lyrics of the song are barely more than “come on baby, let the good times roll.” More than a minute of that became real boring so I cut the number from the show,” Putzke said.

One thing is certain; this show is NOT boring! From the opening overture until the final fun ‘50s hit “Flying Purple People Eater” this ‘50s revue literally rocks and the show’s title plus a song list that showcases incredible harmonies as well as wonderful solos truly does exemplify the “good times” of that former decade.

“Having grown up in that era not realizing at the time that it was indeed the best of times, I wanted to continue the feeling of good times rolling, even now with all the threats to our “good times” at stake,” Putzke said.

When asked why ‘50s music has had a 60-year shelf life, Putzke had a ready answer.

“I think it boils down to something as simple as it’s so danceable, so singable and so memorable,” Putzke said.

He also noted that rock and roll music “was spawned from the youth of this nation during the 1950s. It was their break-out from the mold; so different from the previous decade’s big band sounds.”

“It was a turning point in American music and in American life. This decade made history and the songs, for the most part just make you feel good because good times were truly rolling back then,” Putzke said.

While TGR regulars already know that many shows feature Putzke’s able female voices with three- or four-part harmonies, adding male baritone and tenor voices to the mix only enriches the overall effect.

Watching Wenger portray a grass-skirted, headdressed “Witch Doctor” with sidekick Harris as the ladies crooned “Ooh-Ee-Ooh-Ah-Ah-Ting-Tang-Walla-Walla-Bing-Bang” is by itself worth the price of admission to this delightfully nostalgic show.

The good times are indeed rolling at Theatre-Go-Round Dinner Theatre. An inclusive dinner theatre package at \$55 per person includes a gourmet three-course dinner, show ticket, tax and gratuities. For more information or to make a reservation, call the TGR box office at 772-252-9341.