

“Disco Divas”

Celebrating the sounds of the '70s!

BY BARBARA YORESH

Correspondent for the Vero Beach Newsweekly

Well, put on your dancing shoes!

And even if polyester leisure suits, bell-bottoms, gold neck chains and platform shoes aren't quite your present fashion statement - no matter! - because Theatre-Go-Round Dinner Theatre's rousing production of "Disco Divas" is all about attitude and the sizzling disco sounds of the 1970s.

Subtitled "Celebrating the sounds of the '70s," this musical journey returns to the days of iconic pop/disco artists such as Tina Turner, (the late) Donna Summer, Cher, Bette Midler, Yvonne Elliman and more.

This is one show that is guaranteed to have you up and on the dance floor - or, at the very least, boogying on down in your seat. The strong disco beat is really impossible to ignore and even those hesitant to "do the hustle" or "bump" will nonetheless find the need to groove to the tunes in whatever fashion they can muster!

A smashingly popular hit with local disco-loving audiences when Theatre-Go-Round Dinner Theatre artistic director/impresario Jon Putzke originally debuted the show in 2012, "Disco Divas" has returned by popular demand to audiences at Theatre-Go-Round's new home at The Giraffe Restaurant in Vero Beach.

Starring Eleanor Dixon, Beth McKenzie-Shestak (a professional dancer as well as songstress) and Shamara Turner, these ladies capture the essence of the legendary disco queens and the decade of the '70s. The hits just keep on coming with more than 30 memorable songs made famous by the divas of that period as well as an homage paid to ABBA - one of the most popular groups of the '70s - as well as a hit from the Broadway musical "Evita."

Once again, the Theatre-Go-Round songstresses prove they are divas in their own right and deliver some truly spine-tingling three-part harmonies as well as individually impressive solos - all the while exhibiting accompanying choreography worthy of "Saturday Night Fever."

Shamara Turner's impassioned "I Will Survive" would make its original singer Gloria Gaynor proud and Beth McKenzie-Shestak's Indian head-dressed version of Cher's "Half Breed" was a wonderfully campy impersonation of the perennial pop goddess. Eleanor Dixon's rendition of Bette Midler's "The Rose" was haunting in the beauty of the lyric and Dixon's pure voice.

If the music tells the story of the '70s decade, then the ladies' spoken repartee with the audience adds yet another layer of '70s facts and trivia that jogs one's memory and the unbelievable realization that it all happened 40 years ago!

But as Putzke noted recently when commenting about the dinner theatre's alternating show "Milestones & Memories," music has the ability to transport you right back to when and where you first heard a song. And audience members throughout the restaurant were very obviously recalling and enjoying their own memories of the '70s as they sang along with each song.

Making the experience even more personal is the presentation style of Theatre-Go-Round shows in which cast members perform throughout the dining room, stopping at table sides for a truly up close entertainment experience. Patrons also enjoy an opportunity to meet cast members after each show.

The musical time travel to memorable eras would, in itself, make for a complete and satisfying night. But when paired with the fabulous food and impeccable service of Patrick Tomassi's award-winning Quilted Giraffe Restaurant, then you are truly in for quite a memorable treat.

Chef Kurt Runge prepares a special menu for alternating Theatre-Go-Round shows and this night featured a three-course treat featuring entree choice of (melt-in-your-mouth tender!) carved tenderloin of beef or pan seared mahi mahi. All dinners include a first course of fresh mixed greens topped with a yummy home made vinaigrette; bread and butter; chef's potatoes or rice pilaf; decadent home made vanilla bean bread pudding soufflé and coffee or tea.

"Disco Divas" performs on Sundays Feb. 16 and March 2, 16 and 30 with dinner at 4:30 p.m. and a twilight show at 6 p.m. The Quilted Giraffe is most conveniently located at 500 US 1 (South) in Vero Beach.

The all-inclusive Dinner Theatre Package including the three-course dinner, show, tax and gratuity is \$55 per person. Reservations are required and may be made by calling the box office at 772-252-9341. For additional details, visit the Dinner Theatre website at www.theatregorounddinnertheatre.com.