## **Dallas Theatre Journal**

## **Review for GYPSY, Theatre Arlington**

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## **Gypsy, A Musical Fable**

Book by Arthur Laurents | Music By Jule Styne | Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

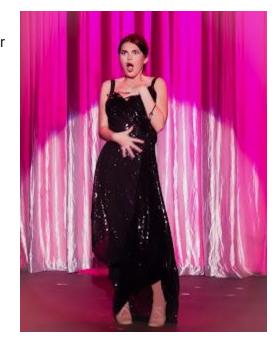


Reviewed by Natalie Shaw

I love, love, LOVE Theatre Arlington! Every time I attend a production there, I feel right at home with everyone's hospitality and their performances are always top notch! And *Gypsy* is no exception to their commitment to greatness. There are so many wonderful things to say about Theatre Arlington, it's difficult to know where to start, but allow me to list a few, in no particular order: 1. Fantastic play selections, 2. Extremely talented artists and performers, 3. A modern, chic and friendly environment with plenty of accessibility for every patron, 4. A live band with musical theatre productions, and 5. Every production is devoted to excellence!

*Gypsy, A Musical Fable* is based on the memoir of "Rose Louise Hovik", aka *Gypsy Rose Lee*. In this script, she is primarily referred to as *Louise*, who is marvelously portrayed by **Presley Duyck**. The musical focuses on the life of *Rose* (played by **Brandy Raper**) and her two daughters, *June* (played by **Tilda Grace**) and *Louise*. *Rose* was

abandoned by her own mother as a young girl, and seeks fame, fortune, and validation, first by way of her daughter, *June*, then, later, by way of her daughter, *Louise*. She will stop at nothing to get it— even pushing three different husbands out the door, if they dared to challenge her! It would seem that *Rose* is set on creating a better life for her children than the one she had for herself in sleepy Seattle, but we have to wonder if her daughters are really her main priority. When *June* makes a life altering decision to leave her mother's desires behind and seek her own opportunities, *Rose* quickly shifts her focus to *Louise*, pursuing stardom for her second, less alluring daughter. When their traveling vaudeville show finds itself in a burlesque theater, the budding *Louise* is both intrigued and fearful of her new environment. With finances tight and fortune low, *Rose* abandons her morals and sacrifices





young *Louise's* innocence and integrity, as a means to survive, disregarding the wisdom of *Louise's* talent agent, *Herbie*, (played by Equity actor **Brian Hathaway**,) who is also Rose's fiancé.

I use the term "fiancé" lightly, because truthfully speaking, *Rose* has strung *Herbie* along throughout the course of their time together. It is only in her desperation to survive that *Rose* finally breaks down and agrees to marry *Herbie*. The emotional pain and fear of abandonment have left *Rose* suspicious of any man's true affections for her, and this is evident in **Raper's** skillful depiction

of her. **Raper** beautifully embraces *Rose's* passionate temperament and need for validation, while also revealing her wounds and trepidation toward anyone who does genuinely love her.

Rose's decision to manipulate Louise in such a selfish way, leads to an explosive scene between Herbie and Rose. While normally a peace-maker, Herbie finally draws the line with Rose. Hathaway's interpretation of Herbie is one of a man with several mixed emotions about his relationship and partnership with his sweetheart. Hathaway makes it clear that Herbie has grown to really love Rose and her daughters, but recognizes the conflict that exists between them when it comes to Rose's controlling nature and Herbie's tendency to cave-in. Hathaway prudently uses charming and soothing



tactics to express affection and win over his counter-part, but turns to obstinance and firmness in such a way



that he appears to be slamming her against the wall with his words, when she has finally gone too far. This comes as a surprise to *Rose*, as well as the audience! **Hathaway** effectively transforms his character abruptly and drastically, catching us off guard, but giving *Herbie* the undivided attention that he so desperately deserves.

Theatre Arlington brings us an incredible production of *Gypsy- A Musical Fable* that is beautifully tragic and epically unforgettable! Executive Producer/Director **Steven D. Morris** has selected a compelling cast of sensational performers and set the tone for a striking story with a powerful message about survival and security. It is one that you surely don't want to miss! Ticket information can be found at theatrearlington.org.

Audience Rating: M for Mature audiences only, for strong language, sexuality and mature content

**Accessible Seating:** Available **Hearing Devices:** Available

Sensory Friendly Showing: Not available

Noises and Sounds to Prepare For: Strobe lights used

Y'all Enjoy! Natalie Shaw