



ENTERTAINMENT: E.N.T.E.R.T.A.I.N.M.E.N.T. – Entertainment. Spelling Bee show spells success.



It's rare that I find myself really sitting back in the theatre and really enjoying a show. I think when you work in the industry it's hard to switch off and not see the mechanics of it all. I watch the work, I see the work. On Thursday, at the opening night of TAG's latest show, I joined a sold out crowd (one of many, it seems) in loving the comedic, quirky musical. I just sat back, laughed, and tapped my toe.

A stellar cast took care of us all with some really strong performances. There wasn't a dud performance on the stage. Usually you can spot the weakest link, but not at TAG. Everyone had their moment; all were strong.

Kyle Gillis, Anders Balderston and Karen Myatt wrestled all night for the show-stealer position. I call it a draw! They all had moments of comedic brilliance. Gillis made me snort out loud at one point, he has created a strong character in William Barfee (pronounced Bar-FAY, if you please!!) Knowing Anders like I do (I have directed all three of these performers in the past), I recognized his signature wanders off the script...and enjoyed them so much more as an audience member than as his director! (I tease, Anders!)

My favourite performance of the night comes from recent Neptune Musical Theatre Program grad. Rebecca Guilderson, as the lisping keeper with the two gay dads, Logainne. She had some moments of comedic brilliance, but managed to break our hearts on numerous occasions.

The energy in the audience was further electrified by the inclusion of three members of the crowd as additional contestants in the Bee. These folks signed up for the chance to be included and the actors have to work them into the show. I love a good bit of audience participation, as long as it's not me. It wasn't. So, I was happy to watch.



So often, as theatre practitioners, we forget that the audience just wants to be entertained. Spelling Bee gave me lots of that. Buckets of fun.

My only annoyance was the microphone dead centre stage, so central to the action and that it wasn't practical. I understand that no-one was, or needed to be, mic-ed up for the show. However, the fun that could have been had with a live mic was a missed opportunity.

Bravo to director Jolene Patterson and to all at TAG for a fun night of theatre. The show runs until July 7th at the Pond Playhouse.