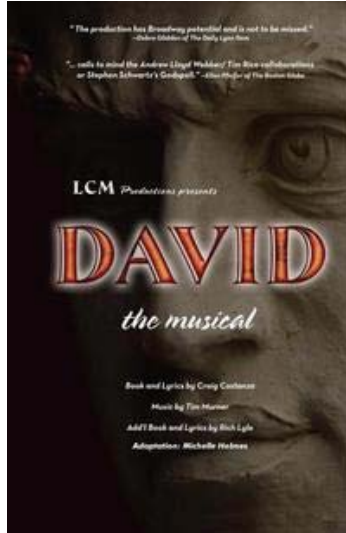


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David: the Musical



Predictability is sin, even in a musical from the Old Testament.

Adam Rosencrance's production of Craig Costanza, Tim Murner, Rich Lyle, and Michelle Holmes musical about the Biblical figure "David" does its best to keep audiences engaged through the use of loud and melodic rock n roll songs, but it can't escape from the lack of drama and psychological insight inherent in a topic about an Old Testament figure.

David (Dane Bowman) is handed the key to the kingdom by the prophet Samuel, and promptly overthrows Saul. Despite his friendship with Saul's son Jonathan, David cannot avoid sinning by falling for the wife of one of his soldiers, Bathsheba (Sara Collins). Even with the prophet Nathan warning him, David tries to get Bathsheba's husband Uriah the Hittite drunk and puts him at the frontlines of his general Joab (Eliot) at Rabbah to die. This sin is carried into the next generation, where David's eldest son Amnon (J. D. Driskill) rapes his half Tamar out of desire. This leads to David's other son Absalom (Jonathan Lanni) killing Amnon and leading a revolt against his father. David's general Joab disobeys David and hangs Absalom for his insolence, causing David to reminisce about his son in writing.

David and Bathsheba has some great songs together, including the act II "I Need Never Dream Again," where the duet turns into a nice counterpoint. Bowman's voice is static, however, and holding a microphone makes him look like he's not acting, but waiting. Other great songs are delivered by Electra Barakos, who plays the minor role of the lover of Amnon, but delivers two strong performances with "A Woman and a Man," which follows David's seduction of Bathsheba nicely, and "You Make Me Happy," during which her lover Amnon is killed by Absalom's forces. Barakos has the dance moves to go along with her voice, and manages to entice both Amnon and her audience. But there were songs that didn't quite do as much. The multiple refrains of "This Is War" are annoying more than inventive. The three repetitions were all more-or-less yelled rather than sung, and don't add much to advance the story.

Unlike the music, the drama was a bit of a bore. Bowman's David never really develops. The Goliath story's just a passing mention. The sinful act with Bathsheba is predictable for those with even rudimentary Bible knowledge. David as the writer of poetry is well designed but never carried out in total. With the small cast, the characters are constantly changing. For instance, the character of Bathsheba, Abigail, Tamar, and all manners of female attendants are all played by Collins. It's easy to mistake Bathsheba and Tamar in quick succession. The physical acts in the play were well done. The sword fights, such as those amongst David and his sons, is not too violent, but planned quite well. The rape of Tamar takes the scene to an extreme, as Collins is tossed by Driskill on to the ground hard. The sword fights too, however, are predictable, as we all know who is supposed to die at the end. While "David" has strong songs and an attractive story, the slow and repetitive performance of the play make

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it difficult to give it attention in full.

"David: the Musical" is performed at Hayworth theatre (<http://www.thehayworth.com>) in Los Angeles, California, until 17th of October, 2010.