

Cherry and Spoon

theatrical musings in Minnesota and beyond

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Friday, October 1, 2021

"Stations of the Heart" at Nautilus Music-Theater



Nautilus Music-Theater's main focus is developing new works of music-theater (a hyphenate that encompasses opera, musicals, plays with music, and everything in between) through their monthly "Rough Cuts" series and their annual Composer-Librettist Studio. Their rare but wonderful full productions seem to pop up out of nowhere, but in reality they've been in the works for years. Such is the case with the lovely new song cycle *Stations of the Heart*, which was first presented at a Rough Cuts 18 years ago. Now, as theaters are starting to open after a very long extended intermission, it's finally being presented as a full production, although a small one - three vocalists and two musicians. It's exactly what I've come to expect from Nautilus - innovative, modern yet connected to a long tradition, and musically gorgeous. Performances continue through October 17 with limited seating, [so make your plans soon](#) (proof of vaccination and mask required).

In a note in the program, lyricist Jim Payne says that this is his attempt at the Great American Songbook, with varied sources of inspiration. Composer George Maurer wrote the songs

literally all over the world, with varied musical styles ("blues, tango, cool jazz, 20s-style, Latin, vocalese, pop, jazz-tinged art-song") to match the varied themes and tones of the lyrics. The result is a really fantastic collection of a dozen and a half songs, each one telling a story of love. New love or old love, happy or sad, funny or heart-breaking, each one is a gem.

The songs were written for #TCTheater artist [Ann Michels](#), but since [she's a little busy in River City](#) right now, they wisely chose three vocalists and split the duties amongst them. Elena Glass, Dee Noah, and Sara Ochs are all talented singers and story-tellers, each in their own unique way. They mostly sing solos, which really allows their individual talent to shine. But we do get to see them onstage together once in the amusing "Hesitation," and it's a highlight. They change costumes for each song, so it really feels like they're playing a different character, and the clothing is a quick way to help us get to know who this person is. Artistic Director Ben Krywosz directs the piece, with a nicely balanced and varied tone from light and funny to sad or poignant, and choreographer Penelope Freeh has designed some fun and subtle moves for the performers.

Nautilus' small studio space in Lowertown St. Paul seats less than 50, with stage and seating arrangement different for every show. For this one, the stage is nestled into the far corner of the room with (faux) concrete stairs going every which way, even upside down and sideways, with a trim of lights turned on at specific moments (scenic and costume design by Victoria Petrovich, lighting design by Jeff Bartlett).

George Maurer also serves as music director and piano accompanist, along with Diane Tremaine on cello, both of whom are tucked under a set of stairs. The best part about this intimate space is that no amplification is required; instruments and vocals blend together beautifully in the space unaltered by microphones or speakers. There's nothing better.

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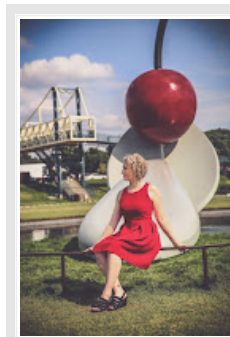


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Stations of the Heart continues through October 17 ([click here for details](#)).



Labels: Ben Krywosz, Dee Noah, Diane Tremaine, Elena Glass, George Maurer, Jeff Bartlett, Jim Payne, Nautilus Music-Theater, Penelope Freeh, Sara Ochs, Stations of the Heart, Victoria Petrovich



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Have you seen a great show recently that you think I should see? I'd love to hear about it, email me at cherryandspoon@gmail.com.

Upcoming Shows

- The Mystery of Bungalow Loft (Fearless Comedy at Mounds Theatre, St. Paul)
- Frozen (Orpheum, downtown Mpls)
- Water from Snow (new musical reading at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, South Mpls)
- Timebomb (free reading at Playwrights' Center, South Mpls and online)
- What the Constitution Means to Me (touring at Guthrie, downtown Mpls)

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"Songs for a New World" at Artistry

There's no question we're entering into a new world, after a tumultuous year and a half that included a global pandemic we're st...



"Heaven" by the Flying Foot Forum at the Guthrie Theater

It was a last minute decision to see Heaven yesterday. I had heard about this dance/music/theater piece about an American photographer i...



"Alice in Wonderland" by Flying Foot Forum at the Lehr Theater

Like the rabbit in Lewis Carroll's beloved novel Alice in Wonderland , I ran to the theater last night thinking "I'm late! I&...



"The 39 Steps" at Lyric Arts

The last time I saw a play at Lyric Arts was January 2020, the bittersweet Irish love story Bloomsday . Returning to their Main Street Stage...



"Hopscotch: Pop-Up Plays about the Future" by Wonderlust Productions at Frogtown Farm

and Park
Wonderlust Productions' newest project is popping up in St. Paul parks this weekend and next. They asked an intrepid group of playwright...

2021 Concerts

- Jamecia Bennett in "The Evolution of Jazz & Blues"
- Jennifer Grimm Sings Judy Garland
- Leslie Vincent
- Storyhill Fest 2021
- Tyler Michaels King and friends sing showtunes

2021 Shows

- 39 Steps
- Animate
- As You Like It
- Audrey Saves the Universe (streaming)
- Bearded Company
- Beehive (streaming)
- Blackout Improv
- Catastrophist (streaming)
- Company
- DIGITAL (livestream)
- Dolls of New Albion (livestream)
- Fringe Festival (16 shows)
- Give Ear (streaming)
- Heroic Acts of Music (streaming)
- Hopscotch: Pop-up Plays about the Future
- I and You (streaming)
- I'll Be Seeing You Again (audio)
- In the Midst of Things (streaming)
- Islander
- Kodachrome (streaming)
- Lady with All the Answers (streaming)
- Live From New York, He's A Prom Date (livestream)
- LOG JAM! A Paul Bunyan Musical Spectacular
- Mamma Mia!
- Midsummer Night's Dream
- Minne-Musicals
- Music Man
- Music to Our Eyes: Designers Sing Out (streaming)
- New Voices Cabaret (streaming)
- Norma Jeane Baker of Troy
- Odyssey
- Ordway Cabaret: Live at the Loading Dock
- Pickle
- Rap Pack (streaming)
- Re-Cast (streaming)
- Revolutionists (streaming)
- Shakespeare LOL
- Sherwood
- Songs for a New World
- Stations of the Heart
- Til Death (livestream)
- To Breed, Or Not To Breed (streaming)
- Today is My Birthday (livestream)
- Twelve Blocks from Where I Live (streaming)
- Uncertainty Principle
- VAXXED and the Furious

- [What to Send Up When It Goes Down](#)
- [WonderLand](#)
- [Xanadu](#)
- [You Who I Always/Never/Once Loved](#)



Disclosure

I receive complementary tickets to shows that I see in exchange for writing about them.

Cherry and Spoon on youtube

- [View my concert videos here](#)

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The sculpture "Spoonbridge and Cherry" was created by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen in 1988 for the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden at the Walker Art Center, original site of the Guthrie Theater. I chose "Cherry and Spoon" as the name of this blog because it seems a fitting and recognizable symbol of the Minnesota cultural scene.