

FOREVER YOUNG by Sing'Theatre

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“Geriatric Romp“

Reviewer: Isaac Tan

Performance: 12 October 2017

In his review of *Forever Young*, staged by Nottingham Playhouse, *The Guardian*'s critic Alfred Hickling mentioned that “the format of the show takes a bit of getting used to” as there is very little dialogue and narrative. Instead, it is a show set in a retirement home for actors who try to relive their heyday, and come to terms with aging through a series of appropriated popular songs.

This will not be a problem for fans of Sing'Theatre as, in its 10th year, it has carved out a niche for staging musical revues. But apart from celebrating this milestone, one wonders why the company chooses to stage this show, as director Hossan Leong admits in the programme notes that it is “difficult to digest” and “convoluted” when he first encountered it.

Sure, it is a geriatric romp and fans of the cast (Hossan Leong, Candice de Rozario, Ebi Shankara, Julian Wong, Karen Tan, Tan Kheng Hua) will relish either seeing them portray an arthritic caricature of themselves or, in Candice de Rozario's case, a no-nonsense nurse trying to keep her unruly charges in line.

Additionally, those unfamiliar with the singing abilities of the actors will be surprised at how well the harmonies and harmonising take off. Furthermore, industry insiders or frequent theatregoers will smile at the various references to performers and past shows.

Despite all that, and the general mirth it brings, the novelty does not last the entire duration of the show.

Also, given Sing'Theatre's ability to present the songs of Edith Piaf or Jacques Brel in such a way that either compels one to relook at the meaning of the songs or sheds light on a lesser known aspect of the performers' lives, *Forever Young* is a downer. The popular songs are merely thematically appropriate, and the lyrics of those songs do not add new meaning within the context of the show.

Sing'Theatre, with its French connections, has always looked abroad in their choice of shows to stage. Perhaps, once in a while, it should let its creative team device a show on their own. This reviewer has no doubt that the cast will be able to come up with a much better show based on popular songs rather than being trapped by the parameters set by Swiss writer, Erik Gedeon.

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ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

FOREVER YOUNG by Sing'Theatre

11 – 21 October 2017

SOTA Drama Theatre

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Isaac started reviewing plays for the student publication, Kent Ridge Common, and later developed a serious interest in theatre criticism after taking a module at university. He is also an aspiring poet, and has a passion for acting and flamenco dancing.