



“Savin’ Up For Saturday Night”

Not Just Another Song and Dance

By Cynthia Citron



It’s the world premiere of a bright, original musical by the Sacred Fools Theater Company called “Savin’ Up For Saturday Night,” and its **authentic and romantic and loads of fun**. Written by Jeff Goode, songs Richard Levinson, directed by Jeremy Aldridge, and performed **by a sensational cast** of 13, **this musical will take you completely by surprise.**

First of all, there’s David Knutson’s incredibly tacky set that exudes so much personality it should get a billing all its own. Decorated with highway signs, hubcaps, old 78-rpm records, and a bright neon beer sign, it catapults you into the play before you even take your seat. The singers slide down a shiny brass pole to get to the stage and exit through a door marked “kitchen.” Presumably, there’s a gas station attached to the premises, which is why the place is called “The Ready Bar ‘N Fill.” All that’s missing is the requisite mechanical horse.

Then, there’s Doc, the bartender (Bryan Krasner), who pours from an endless supply of half-filled liquor bottles and dispenses wisdom and advice to his Saturday night regulars. A soft-spoken, gentle man with a ripe, bartender voice, you love him immediately. In contrast to Eldridge (Brendan Hunt), the owner of the bar and the main “entertainment,” who takes a lot of getting used to. A raucous singer with moves that Elvis never even thought of, Hunt and his spangled jacket dominate the small platform/stage and the four band members crowded in behind him. **The band, by the way, is terrific**, led by musical director and guitarist John Groover McDuffie, with Peter Freiberger on bass, John Palmer on drums, and Dave Fraser, who plays piano as well as a comic character named Roddy.

The GIRL in the musical is Lucinda (Natascha Corrigan), a sassy, sexy babe who is the ex-wife of Eldridge and the pined-for love of Doc, the shy bartender, who finally summons the nerve to make a pass at her with a song called “Let’s Do Something Cheap and Superficial.”

The dancing couples, seated at small tables around the edges of the stage, and sometimes in the audience, don’t have speaking parts, they just **dance up a storm to the lively choreography of Allison Bibicoff**. Except for Rachel Howe, who, as the bar’s only waitress, not only dances but sings a ballad called “Here” to the bar itself, which she loves.

The plot proceeds mainly through the songs, and, especially in the first act, it feels like there are a couple too many of them. But I can’t imagine which ones to cut. They each do a fine job of fleshing out the characters and **are clever and tuneful**.

“Savin’ Up For Saturday Night” may not be everybody’s cup of tea. Country music is certainly not mine. But **this musical is so exuberant and so fresh that you have to enjoy it in spite of yourself**. And at the end you can even go onstage and dance with the players!

“Savin’ Up For Saturday Night” will continue at the Sacred Fools Theater, 660 N. Heliotrope Drive, in Hollywood, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and on Sunday, October 4th at 7. (310) 281-8337