

# FRONTIERS

## Savin' Up For Saturday Night

Sacred Fools Theater  
660 N. Heliotrope Dr., Hlywd  
Fri.-Sat. 8 p.m., Sun. 7 p.m. Through Oct. 30  
2pm matinee on Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> only  
Tickets \$25  
[sacredfools.org](http://sacredfools.org)



Sacred Fools is one of L.A.'s edgiest companies, so it came as a surprise last year when a musical called *Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara* was announced for the Fools' season. It proved to be knockout entertainment with a kinky cabaret sensibility, but also much more than that. The mesmerizing show, written by and starring Vanessa Claire Smith and Jake Broder, as the legendary real-life entertainers of the title, was also a heart-wrenching bio-drama about a passionate romance doomed to failure. The little-show-that-could swept every L.A. theater award imaginable, played for months at the Sacred Fools, then at the Matrix and ended up in a revamped version at the Geffen Playhouse last spring, where it's still running, and clearly bound for bigger things.

Small wonder that the Sacred Fools decided to enter the musical fray again, with a new show helmed by *Louis & Keely's* original director, Jeremy Aldridge. The artistic aims of *Savin'* are clearly far more modest—a toe-tapping piffle for audiences eager to forget their troubles and wallow in unpretentious, country-fried fun. The songs by Richard Levinson and other collaborators are rousing, allowing for **energetic, foot-stompin' dance numbers (spryly choreographed by Allison Bibicoff)**. Meanwhile, the flimsy book by Jeff Goode primarily feels like filler between numbers. A divorced couple, consisting of narcissistic Elvis wannabe Eldridge (Brendan Hunt) and singer-turned waitress Lucinda (Natascha Corrigan), spend the evening a-feudin', a-fightin' and a-fussin' prior to an attraction developing between feisty Lucinda and the amiable bartender Doc (Brian Krasner).

The plot feels disposable, yet the emphasis on atmospherics works wonders, thanks to David Knutson's evocative set design, which makes for a terrific environmental staging. Aldridge periodically breaks the fourth wall to give us a nifty you-are-there feel, simulating a seedy dive in an unspecified rural town. The performers, particularly the suitably over-the-top, swivel-hipped Hunt and the saucy Corrigan sometimes make us forget the vapidness of the script. The five-member band, under the musical direction of John Groover McDuffie, adds to the show's simple pleasures. Don't go expecting Shakespeare-heck, not even *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*—and this whimsical shit-kickin' romp should provide a good time.

—Les Spindle