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ENTERTAINMENT

Blondes do have more fun

By Phillip Cu-Unjieng (The Philippine Star) Updated July 05, 2010 12:00 AM Comments (1)



Nikki Gil plays the lead role Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde*

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MANILA, Philippines - From June 25 to July 18, Atlantis Productions' *Legally Blonde: The Musical* is running at the Meralco Theater; and for theater enthusiasts, for people out for a night of exuberant fun and entertainment, the show is an absolute must!

Directed by Chari Arespacochaga, the impressive cast includes Nikki Gil in the lead role of Elle Woods, Nyoy Volante, Jett Pangan, Jinky Llamanzares, Cris Villonco, Guji Lorenzana, Geneva Cruz, Calvin Millado — all voices to contend with, and throwing themselves eagerly into their roles. Based on the movie that starred Reese Witherspoon, Luke Wilson and Selma Blair, and was such a guilty pleasure; the play takes the essential elements of the film, places them in a "musical blender," and produces magic! Music and lyrics are by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin, book by Heather Hach, and based (as the film was) on the novel written by Amanda Brown.

If you've been living in a foxhole since 2001, and have no clue what *Legally Blonde* is all about, it's about Malibu sorority girl Elle (cheerleading and fashion being her primary concerns in life, giddy that a fashion magazine is "named after her") who enters Harvard Law School as she pursues her boyfriend, Warner, to win him back. Of course, she discovers a new Elle in the process, managing to help others

through her newfound knowledge of the law, and even successfully defends exercise [Queen](#) Brooke Wyndham, who has been charged with murdering her husband — and all this without losing the essence of what Elle was at the beginning of the musical [comedy](#). The one-liners, the situational gags and set-ups that made the film so enjoyable, are all recreated in the play, and with the added dimension of catchy music and songs, formulated in a mainstream pop genre.

Nikki Gil is a revelation in the musical; we all knew she had the pipes, but to see her sustain her energy throughout the longish play is quite the thing. Nyoy Volante (Emmett) seems a tad timid when doing his spoken lines, but comes into his own whenever he breaks into song. I was with my eldest son, Quintin, at the preview; and he agreed with me, that the two showstopping numbers were Jett Pangan's *Blood in the Water* (Jett plays law professor Callahan) and Jinky Llamanzares' *Ireland* (Jinky is Paulette, the beautician who befriends Elle, and plays a crucial role during the Wyndham trial). As for stealing scenes, look out for Calvin Millado as a UPS delivery man.

While the story may be old hat for those who have seen the film, it's the energy and verve, the enthusiasm the performing artists thrust into their interpretations that make this musical such a joy to watch. There were some minor technical sound problems the night I watched, and hopefully, this will have been solved when the regular run commences. Atlantis Productions numbers are 892-7078 or 840-1187, and supporting a production such as this one will go a long way in keeping theater vibrant and alive here in Manila. Too often, the costs of acquiring the rights (not to mention actual production and stage costs) make producing plays here such a crap shoot, and it is such a shame given the reservoir of talent and creativity that's ready to be tapped.

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FUNFARE By Ricardo F. Lo

All eyes are on the hardcourt now that the 73rd Season of the UAAP is in full swing, hosted by De La Salle University (DLSU).

Rachel does an Olivia Newton-John



DIRECTLINE By Boy Abunda

Pop singer and theater artist Rachel Alejandro is gearing up for the most demanding performance of her life — roller skating to Olivia Newton-John and Electric Light Orchestra songs in Atlantis Productions' upcoming Broadway musical comedy *Xanadu* which opens at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati City on Sept. 3.

New show replaces Wowowee July 31



FUNFARE UPDATE By Ricardo F. Lo

As *Funfare Update* correctly predicted, Willie Revillame will not return to *Wowowee* on Saturday, July 31, as widely reported in the tabs.

Kylie holds up the disco port



SOUNDS FAMILIAR By Baby A. Gil

Madonna started it all, but I do not think that even the Material girl envisioned how far the music would go or that there would come a time when disco would be considered old-fashioned.

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