

March 25, 2024

“King of Pangaea: A New Musical”

Book, music and lyrics by Martin Storrow

Directed by Michael Baron

“King of Pangaea: A New Musical” is theater magic.

“King of Pangaea” combines all the best of musical theater: great story, fabulous music and superior acting. The show had the audience laughing, crying and left them feeling content by the transformative nature of the story. Kudos to the very strong, talented cast: Logan Corley, Matthew Alvin Brown, Wendy Melkonian, Dirk Lumbard, Taloria Merricks and Riley McCool.

Martin Storrow weaves a deeply personal story around the death of his mother, which happened when he was a child. The genuine honesty of the story combined with imaginative whimsy is priceless. His beautiful lyrical music and poetic lyrics have created songs to remember.

Storrow incorporates some of his personal memories into the story. For example, Storrow remembers spending his 11th birthday in a hospital waiting room while his mother and father were with doctors. This memory is part of the plot. Storrow brought to OKC an envelope upon which his mother had drawn a picture. This device plays a major part in the story.

Christopher (Corley) serves a narrator and main character, remembering the events surrounding his mother’s death. He first goes back in a time to when he was a child (McCool) in a hospital waiting room working a puzzle. He struggles with his mother’s (Melkonian) illness and eventually her death. Going through her papers he finds a hand drawn map to Pangaea, a place he and his creative mother devised to help him deal with her illness. The map promises him treasure if he can get to Pangaea. Christopher hopes the treasure will bring his mother back. However, it is very unclear exactly how to get to Pangaea. Then Elijah (Lumbard) enters. Elijah gives him three coins that will take him some place else. All he has to do is throw them into water. Christopher does and immediately finds him on a ferry on the River of Grief. Ferry captain (Brown) and passenger (Merricks) welcome him. But he misses his stop to Pangaea. Through a series of trials he eventually arrives at Pangaea only to be met by Elijah, again. Elijah coaches him on how to be King and his search for the treasure begins.

Be assured that while dealing with cancer and death, this show is neither morbid nor dreary. The colorful, yet simple sets by Lee Savage set the tone. And the lighting by Fabian J. Garcia totally adds to the atmosphere.

In a production filled with solid musical numbers three were true show stoppers. The first “Everyone I Love” by Elijah (Lumbard) is about the hazards of living 1000 years. It is a light hearted frolic that includes some fabulous tap dancing by Lumbard. Brown as the captain

delivers the strong “The Thing about the River.” And Corley and Lumbard literally stop the show with “King of Pangaea.”

In the after show talk orchestrator/ arranger Anthony Lucas describes how he used various instrumental combination to move the story. Storrow shared that the poem read at the end was actually written by his mother, who was a stay-at-home mother who liked to write poetry.

“The King of Pangaea: A New Musical” has been brought to OKC as part of Lyric’s New Work Initiative. This is its first production!

This production, is being produced in partnership with Aurora Theater, located outside Atlanta,

“The King of Pangaea: A New Musical” will play at Lyric’s Plaza Theater through April 7. Simple words do not capture the power of this production. It is one that must be seen to appreciate the creative genius this team has crafted.