

Improv: The Musical Makes Debut Appearance at Art Town
Utility Players Revamp Original Musical for July

[July 29th, 2010] Reno, Nevada: The Utility Players, voted one of the best comedians in 2009 [RN&R], is the premiere short form improv group in town. Reno's own live version of *Whose Line is it Anyway?*, The Utility Players incorporate improv with musical comedy, sketch comedy, stand up, game shows, and more. The Utility Players just entered their third season with the “Homefield Advantage Tour” - a six month tour of different venues and spaces around town. The tour wraps up with **Improv: The Musical** – an original musical production.

The Utility Players premiered the musical as the finale to their second season back in December. The musical relates the somewhat mythical tale of the formation of an improv comedy troupe. Set in present day Reno, this modern day fairy tale follows aspiring comedian Jes as she attempts to follow her dreams of fame and comedy. Her wish is granted by a fairy godmother who sets Jes and six other strangers of on their path to achieving their goals of making people laugh and turning it into a career. However, what kind of musical would it be unless there was a little conflict and angst? An evil witch, hellbent on foiling the fairy godmother's seamless plan, hatches a plot to use a downtrodden stand up comedian named Guy to steal the laughter from all the citizens of Reno. Will the evil witch and our intrepid villain succeed or will the Utility Players be able to stop the villain in some epic heroic battle? The plot, script, music, and lyrics were all created and composed by the Utility Players.

The musical features of number of local personalities who are adding their creative talents to the fold. Amanda Alvey, a local Reno actress, had a minor role in the musical last time around as the sarcastic and apathetic emcee of an open mic night. Since then, her part has been expanded and now is one of the principal players of the musical. Alvey is a fantastic performer and has a commanding stage presence. Also on the line up for the cast is local singer/song writer Ariel Lea, a recent addition to the Utility Player team. Lea has stepped in as the vocal & musical director for the production, lending her powerhouse voice & vast show choir and musical theater experience to the mix. Last, but certainly not least, the musical features local drag queen Miss Ginger Devine. Voted among the best drag queens in Reno in 2009 [RN&R], Devine is stepping into the roles of the fairy godmother and evil witch to add as she calls it “ a little flair, some campiness, and a pinch of dramatics to the production”.

“It truly is a group effort” relates producer, and one of the stars in the musical, Jessica Levity. Levity goes on to say that “each of the Utility Players are undertaking a different aspect of the musical from scripting writing & directing to vocal coaching and music composition”.

For those that attended the December reveal of “Utility Players: The Musical” should not be deterred from seeing the musical again. “It's a completely different musical than the one in December” puts forth director for the musical Christopher Daniels. He says that the troupe “really examined the musical in totality figuring out what worked, what didn't, what needs to be changed, or simply taken out”. Daniels assured that “although the musical is comedic in nature, we wanted poignant moments, strong complex character arcs, and be able to answer the 'so what?' question of why people should see this musical”.

When asked what set this musical apart from others, the troupe had different answers. Producer Levity stated that “i think part of it is the group chemistry, we're not just a group of random strangers cast into these roles ... these are roles we created for ourselves and poured parts of ourselves into”. Daniels

related that “having improv scenes/games woven into the musical is really unique and rare ... every time we perform this musical the improv is always going to be different based upon audience suggestion”.

The troupe was more than ecstatic, when the event was picked up for Artown. Artown, a month long celebration in July, showcases more than 400 events featuring artists - both local and abroad – to display the cultural and artistic diversity present in the city and across the world. Soon after the Utility Players received confirmation that the Siena Casino would be the host venue for the Artown event. “Performing in one of the Siena ballrooms is going to make the world of difference with this musical” gushes Levity, “audience members are going to walk into a beautiful ballroom with spacious seating, a bar, and an expansive stage ... it's going to be nothing like last time”.

IMPROV: The Musical is scheduled for Thursday, July 29th, in the Siena Casino's Ballroom at 7:00pm. Tickets are \$10 at the show and make sure to get there early and grab a drink at the bar. For more information about the Utility Players make sure to check out their website at www.utilityplayerscomedy.com