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Theater: *Ghost*, *Leap Of Faith* and *Lyons* Struggle on Broadway

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GHOST THE MUSICAL * 1/2 out of ****
LEAP OF FAITH ** out of ****
THE LYONS ** 1/2 out of ****

Three new shows on Broadway that have one thing in common: none of them are wholly satisfying, but they are all genuine attempts at serious theater. So hearing

that *Leap Of Faith* will close on Sunday is too bad, even if it's not too surprising. Creating theater is some of the hardest work in the arts. When it succeeds, there's nothing better. When it doesn't quite click, they still go out again night after night and that must be awfully hard. None of these shows can even enjoy the delicious black humor of a notorious flop; they're just musicals and plays that didn't quite come together.

GHOST THE MUSICAL * 1/2 **LUNT-FONTANNE THEATRE**

One of the least promising ideas for turning a movie into a musical proves just as awkward and ill-suited as you might imagine. Based on the Oscar-winning (!) 1990 film starring Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore and Whoopi Goldberg, it's an ungainly, tiresomely faithful adaptation. The movie itself was an inexplicable success and here we are reminded again of its uninteresting plot involving our hero's death, his oily best friend and the fake psychic called in to rescue our heroine from danger. If you expect multiple variations of the Righteous Brothers classic "Unchained Melody," you won't be disappointed. If you expect some clever stagecraft to mimic the supernatural moments of the movie (like when Swayze leaps from a subway platform onto a moving car with spectral ease), you also won't be disappointed. If you expect good songs and compelling characters, however...

The strength of this show is its technical production. Designer Rob Howell, Video & Projection Designer Jon Driscoll, Sound by Bobby Aitken and the Illusions by Paul Kieve use often deceptively simple, old-fashioned tricks to create a sense of the spirit world. We see people in subway cars who seem to be floating up from the ground at all sorts of impossible angles. We see our hero leap back and forth from visible to invisible. We see glimpses of heaven and hell.

Unfortunately, the technical production is also a weakness. This show has a huge cast. But often when the

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stage is filled with dancers we also get video projections of more people moving about the city and it actually detracts from the impact of all those live performers. Time and again the visual pizzazz distracts us from the story at hand. It's a shame when 15 or so people are on stage dancing and singing their hearts out and your eye is drawn away from them. Plus much of the story is set in an insanely big loft that only exists in the movies and yet most of the time we spend in the foyer and living room at the front of the stage and that beautiful space is lost. (Maybe this is just a New Yorker's reaction.)

That apartment is the find of Sam (Richard Fleeshman) and Molly (Cassie Levy) two beautiful young people with a high-paying job in finance (him), a flourishing career in the arts (her) and beautiful bodies (both of them). It's kind of hard not to hate them so it's good that he's quickly killed off and she's in mortal danger. Da'Vine Joy Randolph has Goldberg's role as the fake psychic who suddenly finds herself getting real messages from the beyond. Randolph has fun in a role that could be shameless pandering and maintains her dignity. Fleeshman has the toughest part as Sam since for most of the show he is literally acting on his own because the other characters can't make eye contact with someone they can't see. It's a colorless part and -- perhaps through not fault of his own -- he makes no impression. Bryce Pinkham is the duplicitous best friend; he's better at the dramatic moustache twirling than the singing.

Of all the performers, Levy is by far the standout. She has a sterling voice and a commanding presence. Hopefully we'll get a chance to see her in a much better show very soon. But even Levy can't turn anonymous songs into show-stoppers. The tunes by pop wizards Dave Stewart (of Eurythmics of course) & Glen Ballard vanish from your memory as soon as they're over. The very talented Matthew Warchus proves an able traffic cop as director. But the source material (by Bruce Joel Rubin) simply isn't very good and no special effects can bring a moribund story to life. Still, the blood, sweat and tears they spent trying to do just that is all visible on the stage.

LEAP OF FAITH ** out of ****
ST. JAMES THEATRE

Ghost The Musical has been running in the West End for almost a year but whenever I told someone they'd turned that movie into a Broadway show, they giggled in disbelief. *Leap Of Faith* is a curious choice, but at least it made more sense. The 1992 movie starred Steve Martin as a con artist/faith healer and made a very modest \$22 million at the box office. It's no cult favorite a la *Newsies* but you can understand the appeal. A traveling preacher lets you talk to the audience and toss in a gospel choir for some big rousing numbers. Plus you've got the faith angle, a town thirsty for some rain (*110 In The Shade*, anyone?) and a little kid who just wants to walk.

The result is a serious show with a lot of talent but very little dramatic excitement. I see two reasons for this. One, the very talented Raul Esparza was the wrong choice to play Jonas Nightingale; he has an inherent lack of trustworthiness about him that makes Esparza very compelling as a hero. But as a con man? You wouldn't trust him for a moment. Mind you, he's the best thing in the show and the one reason you should rush to see it if you're a fan of his before it closes on Sunday. Two, there is no story. Everyone except the backup singers in the choir know the score from the very first scene. Nightingale knows he's a fraud. The sexy sheriff (Jessica Phillips) knows he's a fraud. His daughter (Kendra Kassebaum) and his lead singer/accountant Ida Mae (Kecia Lewis-Evans) know he's a fraud. Maybe Jake, the little boy who can't walk doesn't know Jonas is a fraud, but what's his excuse? Everyone around him -- including Jonas himself -- keeps telling him it's a sham.

If any doubt remains about how the story will turn out, it evaporates thanks to the framing device of presenting the musical as a New York City revival meeting headed by Jonas himself. The only question is



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whether the water-parched town Jonas is preaching in will finally get a rain storm and if you're really wondering that, you've never seen a Broadway finale before.

The tech elements are all solid thanks to director Christopher Ashley, with the sets by Robin Wagner in particular a model of efficiency. They easily set the stage for the tent revival, behind the scenes moments and other locations like the sheriff's office and home. The songs by Alan Menken (music) and Glenn Slater (lyrics) aren't bad, with songs like "Lost," "Dancin' In The Devil's Shoes" and "Are You On The Bus?" elevated mightily by the people singing them. Lewis-Evans is a strong performer, Krystal Joy Brown is a lovely presence as her daughter and Leslie Odom Jr. also a stand-out as her straight and narrow preacher son who disapproves of this chicanery. Esparza is given an 11 o'clock number to wrestle with his lack of faith and show a man struggling towards decency and a moment of grace after a lifetime of quick cons. He pours his heart into it and makes "Jonas' Soliloquy" compelling despite the lack of substance in the rest of the show that would be needed in the show to truly make it a powerful moment.

The book by Janus Cercone and Warren Leight put a lot of work into restructuring the movie into a viable Broadway show and the effort shows. It wasn't enough to help that oddball, not very good movie become a good musical. But you can't say the leap wasn't worth attempting.

THE LYONS ** 1/2 out of ****
CORT THEATRE

What a season for Linda Lavin. She has major connections to three of the biggest shows around. Lavin was part of the key out of town production of *Follies*, starred at Lincoln Center in *Other Desert Cities* and now has the key role in *The Lyons*, the long-overdue Broadway debut of playwright Nicky Silver. No one who wants to see Lavin in top form will be disappointed by her here or anytime. I just wish the show itself were more of a triumph for Silver than what we have.

Act One is the strongest, with Lavin in acidic form sitting in a hospital room waiting for her husband Ben (the excellent Nick Latessa) to die. She's leafing through catalogs trying to get ideas for how to redecorate the living room with Ben complaining that he likes the living room just the way it is. She stares him down; does it really matter what she does with a living room he's never going to see again? Clearly Lavin's Rita is not going to waste any time getting on with her life.

Whether that life will include their children is an open question. Gay son Curtis (Michael Esper) keeps trying to make peace with his father for making so clear what a disappointment the kid was to him. Daughter Lisa (Kate Jennings Grant) keeps pathetically wondering if her ex-husband might take her back. And as you might expect from the caustic, black-humored Silver, it's all downhill from there.



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it's a curious fact that very little happens on stage in the show. *The Lyons* is almost all exposition as we're told what has happened or is happening off stage. It's all tell, don't show. Lisa is a serious alcoholic who begins drinking again. Oh and the ex-husband she pines for? He beat her. Curtis's gay boyfriend of the almost impossibly perfect life? Imaginary. Curtis always has been and always is alone. If Ben feels his imminent death is getting lost in the shuffle, you can't blame him.

I felt the generally marvelous Lavin was pushing some of the laughs a bit strongly at first. But by the end of the show I realized that was all she had to work with. The two scenes in Act Two were significantly downhill in interest. We watch Curtis awkwardly and embarrassingly stalk a neighbor he's been obsessively spying on, while Lisa starts sleeping with her AA minder. When Rita announces she's going to go away with a boy toy -- perhaps forever -- who can blame her?

We start with a group of characters who become increasingly less interesting (and less funny) as the show goes on. Latessa is pitch-perfect as Ben; he never plays his part for laughs. Lavin is a pro and at least she's not saddled with the hard-to-swallow revelations of Curtis (a fine Esper in a sketchy role) and Lisa (Grant, the least convincing performance of the night). A quick scene-setter with Ben talking to the audience from beyond the grave feels like the remains of a much earlier draft or the glimmer of an idea Silver dropped. It should have been cut. The sets by Allen Moyer are solid, though my guest felt any and all hospital rooms should look dingier and more depressing than the relatively clean one on display here. Mark Brokaw directed with efficiency; the problems here are all on the page.

The Theater Season 2011-2012 (on a four-star scale)

The Agony And The Ecstasy Of Steve Jobs ** 1/2

All-American **

All's Well That Ends Well/Shakespeare in the Park **

Assistance **

The Atmosphere Of Memory 1/2 *

Blood Knot at Signature **

Bob *** 1/2

Bonnie & Clyde feature profile of Jeremy Jordan

Broadway By The Year: 1950 ** 1/2

Broadway By The Year: 1997 ** 1/2

Carrie ** 1/2

The Cherry Orchard with Dianne Wiest **

Chinglish * 1/2

Close Up Space *

Clybourne Park *** 1/2

Crane Story **

Cymbeline at Barrow Street Theatre ***

Damn Yankees **

Death Of A Salesman with Philip Seymour Hoffman ** 1/2

Dedalus Lounge * 1/2

Early Plays (Eugene O'Neill at St. Ann's Warehouse) *

End Of The Rainbow *

Ernani at Met w Angela Meade *** 1/2

An Evening With Patti Lupone and Mandy Patinkin ***

Evita * 1/2

Follies *** 1/2

Fragments ***

Galileo with F. Murray Abraham **

The Gershwins' Porgy And Bess *** 1/2

Ghost The Musical * 1/2

Godspell ** 1/2

Goodbar * 1/2

Gore Vidal's The Best Man ** 1/2

Hair ***

Hand To God ***

Hero: The Musical * 1/2

How The World Began * 1/2

Hugh Jackman: Back On Broadway ***
Hurt Village ***
Irving Berlin's White Christmas ***
It's Always Right Now, Until It's Later *** 1/2
Jesus Christ Superstar * 1/2
King Lear at Public with Sam Waterston **
Krapp's Last Tape with John Hurt ***
The Lady From Dubuque ** 1/2
Lake Water **
Leap Of Faith **
Leo ***
Love's Labor's Lost at the PublicLab ** 1/2
The Lyons ** 1/2
Lysistrata Jones *
Magic/Bird *
The Maids **
Man And Boy * 1/2
The Man Who Came To Dinner **
Maple And Vine **
Master Class w Tyne Daly ** 1/2
Measure For Measure/Shakespeare in the Park ***
Milk Like Sugar ***
Mission Drift * 1/2
Misterman ** 1/2
The Mountaintop ** 1/2
Newsies at Papermill **
Newsies On Broadway ** 1/2
Nice Work If You Can Get It **
Ninth And Joanie *
No Place To Go ** 1/2
Now. Here. This. * 1/2
Olive and The Bitter Herbs ** 1/2
On A Clear Day You Can See Forever * 1/2
Once *** 1/2
Once on Broadway ****
One Arm ***
One Man, Two Guvnors on Broadway ***
Other Desert Cities on Broadway ** 1/2
Painting Churches * 1/2
Peter And The Starcatcher *** 1/2
Pigpen's The Nightmare Story *** 1/2
Private Lives **
Queen Of The Mist ** 1/2
Radio City Christmas Spectacular ** 1/2
Regrets * 1/2
Relatively Speaking * 1/2
Richard III w Kevin Spacey at BAM ***
The Road To Mecca ** 1/2
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Seminar **
Septimus & Clarissa *** 1/2
Shlemiel The First ** 1/2
Silence! The Musical * 1/2
69 Degrees South * 1/2
Song From The Uproar **
Sons Of The Prophet *** 1/2
Sontag: Reborn *
A Streetcar Named Desire with Nicole Ari Parker **
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Titus Andronicus at Public with Jay O. Sanders * 1/2

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[Unnatural Acts](#) ***
[Venus In Fur](#) ***
[We Live Here](#) **
[Wild Animals You Should Know](#) ** 1/2
[Wit](#) ** 1/2
[Zarkana](#) **

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[Blanche: The Bittersweet Life Of A Wild Prairie Dame](#) *** 1/2
[Central Avenue Breakdown](#) ** 1/2
[Crazy, Just Like Me](#) ***
[Cyclops: A Rock Opera](#) *
[Ennio: The Living Paper Cartoon](#) ** 1/2
[F---ing Hipsters](#) **
[Ghostlight](#) **
[Gotta Getta Girl](#) ** 1/2 for staged reading
[Greenwood](#) *
[Jack Perry Is Alive \(And Dating\)](#) * 1/2
[Kiki Baby](#) ** 1/2
[Kissless](#) * 1/2
[Madame X](#) **
[The Pigeon Boys](#) ***
[Time Between Us](#) * 1/2
[Tut](#) **

FRINGEFEST NYC 2011

[Araby](#) *
[The Bardy Bunch](#) **
[Books On Tape](#) ** 1/2
[Civilian](#) **
[Hard Travelin' With Woody](#) ***
[Leonard Cohen Koans](#) *** 1/2
[The More Loving One](#) **
[The Mountain Song](#) *** 1/2
[Paper Cuts](#) ***
[Parker & Dizzy's Fabulous Journey To The End Of The Rainbow](#) ** 1/2
[Pearl's Gone Blue](#) ***
[Rachel Calof](#) ** 1/2
[Romeo & Juliet: Choose Your Own Ending](#) **
[2 Burn](#) * 1/2
[Walls and Bridges](#) **
[What The Sparrow Said](#) ** 1/2
[Yeast Nation](#) ***

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

Note: Michael Giltz is provided with free tickets to shows with the understanding that he will be writing a review.

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05:25 PM on 05/15/2012

To adult, intelligent lovers of theater there is nothing that would be more unsatisfying than A Disney musical. What could be more nauseating than these heartless cartoons loaded with costly costumes and sickeningly sweet songs. Children may be delighted and Kansans maybe be thrilled, but we who grew up on Frank Loesser, Lerner and Lowe, Rodgers and Hammerstein and other true creatives can only shake our heads and mourn the death of Broadway.

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08:39 AM on 05/12/2012

If you look at the weekly Broadway grosses, Ghost certainly isn't struggling! It appears to be a hit with the public!

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER
Michael Giltz
freelance writer
127 Fans

12:13 PM on 05/12/2012

Thanks for commenting. I was speaking artistically. It's hard to get figures on how much a show costs to operate week to week (something like Godspell is a lot cheaper than the tech-heavy, large-cast Ghost, for example). It's doing okay and is probably breaking even week to week. But when it's grossing less than half of its potential (\$650,000 last week out of a possible \$1.3 million) and 29% of the seats are empty, it's far from a hit. Fans like you will have to hope word of mouth is positive and that ticket sales and grosses can rise in the coming weeks. On the plus side, it has played in London for almost a year so there is hope.

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Posted: 07/29/2012 1:48 pm

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*This is the sixth and final entry in a series of roundups covering shows appearing in the [New York Musical Theatre Festival](#), or *NYMF*. Every year I attend as many shows as I can and usually see one or two that will rank among the best of the year, as well as always discovering some new talented performers and behind*

the scenes artists I'll want to keep an eye on in future productions. Go to the [NYMF website](#) for more info on inexpensive tickets.

A LETTER TO HARVEY MILK ** 1/2 out of ****

SWING STATE * 1/2 out of ****

STAND TALL: A ROCK MUSICAL * 1/2 out of ****

A LETTER TO HARVEY MILK ** 1/2 out of ****

SIGNATURE THEATRE

This is a sweet, well-acted and sung show about a nice old widowed butcher in San Francisco who starts taking a writing class from a nice young lesbian. She likes speaking Yiddish, he likes chatting with her. Dredging up painful stories from the past? Not so much. But the nice young teacher cajoles and kvetches and soon the stories are pouring out.

Unfortunately, the book -- based on the short story by Leslea Newman -- is weighted down with not one but two major tragedies. The butcher Harry is haunted by dreams about the assassination of politician Harvey Milk (a regular in his store) AND memories of the Holocaust. He's also haunted -- but in a more comforting manner -- by his late wife Frannie, who is always ready with a quip or a word of comfort.

Director David Schechter sets a good tone with his large and capable task. Michael Bartoli does strong work in multiple roles, especially the pushy, friendly Harvey Milk. Cheryl Stern is forced into being a joke machine at first as the ghost of Frannie, but when the show turns more serious she's allowed to bring a little more nuance to her role, although she'll still get laughs by running across the stage with her hands thrown up in disgust or singing "What A Shonda."

But the heart of the show is the warm friendship that develops between Barbara the teacher and Harry the butcher. Leslie Kritzer is very good as Barbara and has a powerhouse voice to match. Even better is Jeff Keller as Harry. He holds the stage easily with his avuncular manner and charming voice, ably

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Bill Moyers
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guiding us through Harry's dreams, interactions with the ghost of his wife, flashbacks to the war or chats with Harvey and present day encounters with Barbara. The book by Jerry James is actually quite complicated in its structure but Keller keeps us rooted in the moment.

The songs by Laura L. Kramer (music) and Ellen M. Schwartz (lyrics) range from silly to schmaltzy but for quite a while they move the story along easily, though I doubt sentiments like the one suggesting that if we all held hands then no one could hold a gun and other aphorisms.

But the central problem is the looming presence of the Holocaust, which feels too weighty a matter for such a low-key musical like this. It's there from the beginning since we immediately see a person in Holocaust death camp garb present in Harry's dreams that open the show. (That dream which centers on the shooting of Milk is also repeated far too often. We're hardly likely to forget the gunning down of a man in a one act musical, so there's no need to keep showing it. The troubled look in Keller's eyes would be plenty.)

It's there to explain why Harry drives a wedge between himself and Barbara by angrily insisting she not announce to the world that she's a lesbian. Finally, at the climax, he tells her one more story, a story from the death camps that will explain his attitude. However moving, what's to explain? He's an old man in 1986 who can be very friendly and even fatherly to a lesbian but flinches when she brashly announces it to a waiter in a restaurant. If his age isn't explanation enough, surely the fact that he treated Harvey Milk like a son and then saw Milk brutally killed for being openly gay would be explanation enough?

The climax may be over-burdened but that shouldn't obscure the solid work all around, including the musical direction, orchestrations and arrangements by Ned Paul Ginsburg which bring out the best in the small ensemble and the score by Kramer. When the show stays in the low-key vein that suits it, the songs often soar and any show would be glad to have two leads as solid and effective as Keller and Krttzer. Keller and Kritzer -- it sounds like an old vaudeville act and indeed at its best *A Letter To Harvey Milk* allows these two to play off each other with practiced ease.

SWING STATE * 1/2 out of **** 45TH STREET THEATRE

Here's a rather confused two-hander that benefits greatly from the personable leads who perform it. Bonnie (Morgan Weed) is a hardcore Christian and public school teacher who can barely get through a day minding her little students (pre-school or kindergarten or maybe first grade at most; I'm not sure which) without blurting out her love for Jesus. That's put her on suspension and created a tremendous amount of stress.

Unfortunately, her favorite chiropractor has left town and the business has been bought by a gay man named Neil (Jed Resnick), who has a new, gentler approach to pain but also asks a lot of nosy questions (like when was her last period). Bonnie needs to learn to relax (and maybe save her career). Neil has come back to this small town where he spent summers with his grandparents, hoping to make peace with himself after a childhood of bullying. (When boys steal his pants and underwear, Neil comes home in tears only to have his grandfather ignore him in disgust. Sissy!) Lessons, obviously, will be learned.

The book and lyrics are by Dana Yeaton and the music by Andy Mitton. Unfortunately, the tone of the show is never quite established. Far and away the best song is the wickedly funny tune Bonnie sings when she's reading a picture book to her students about the evils of abortion. But overall, the tone is more gentle and timid. We're supposed to feel equal empathy for both characters as they learn to appreciate and respect each other.

But the hard-right Christian is hard to like as shown here. Bonnie is practically unhinged and so unhappy she's sad and alone. Not only has she endangered her job by blurting out Jesus five times a day to her students, she's also estranged herself from her fellow Christians by trying to lead protests against the school that backfired greatly. About the worst that one can say about Neil is that he isn't too fond of people who denigrate his very existence and yet still tries to be professional.

Bonnie drives away even more friends (and blindsides Neil) when she tries to make him a member of her Bible group, leading Neil to angrily denounce her and the rest as hypocrites and throw down a Bible in disgust. She later chides him for not recognizing that many in the group were ready to accept him, ignoring the fact that given her beliefs it was likely they'd accept him only if he was ready to renounce being actively gay.

This is all to add too much weight and thought to a story that just wants to let these two people get to know each other. But it would be more interesting if Bonnie weren't such a cartoon and Neil so tepid. Weed and Resnick have some good fun during their chiropractic sessions but a show in which Neil not only heals Bonnie with his touch but gets her period flowing again so she can be a complete woman is asking a lot. Plus, with a swing set ensconced front and center and the title of the show *Swing State*, they really should work on a song about childhood and innocence surrounding swings so that the main prop on the stage isn't just used at the last moment for a final image but serves a more prominent part in the



Treatment



Dean Baker
Poverty: The New Growth Industry
in America

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show's imagination.

STAND TALL: A ROCK MUSICAL * 1/2 out of ****

45TH STREET THEATRE

This is a biblical tale about David and Goliath set to rock music a la *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. It starts with the solid song "Find Us A King" and ends with another one, the title tune "Stand Tall," both rousing performed by a talented cast. In between we have a very weak book and a few decent tunes that can't wipe out the tired jokes and plodding action that constitutes the show.

Problem number one is that the show is purportedly based on the tale of David versus Goliath, but in fact ignores even the broad outlines of that story. Here, David is a rock star who plays for the cruel king and longs for his daughter. Goliath was a former member of the band but is kicked out because he never showed up for practice and now resents David. When the prophecy spreads that David will be the next king, said king wants to kill him but then decides if David marries his daughter than the kid will have to support him anyway and money is all he wants so problem solved. Meanwhile, Goliath, rather than being part of the army defending the king, just wants to settle his own grudge.

Why use the name of David and Goliath if you're going to ignore even the underpinning motivations of that story? Presumably it was because they decided to recast David and Goliath as a story of bullying. Problem number two? There's no real bullying. Goliath is angry that David "stole" his rock band and wants revenge. But he doesn't spend the show taunting and bullying David. They barely interact until they have one fight and then resolve their differences with a guitar solo showdown. And just in case we think Goliath is just a jerk, we're quickly shown that he's physically and psychologically abused by his father. At the final, that's resolved in a heartbeat in the best tradition of after-school specials and David and Goliath might even become friends again. It's that kind of show.

The dreadful book -- filled with dull repetitions of the plot, bad jokes and the ineffective device of a saucy angel disguised as a black sheep playing the narrator -- needs to be entirely rewritten. It's a pity because when they put their minds to it, Lee Wyatt-Buchan and Sandy & Aldie Chalmers can deliver some very strong tunes. Along with the opening and closing numbers, they score with Goliath's "Reasonable Man" and the black sheep's predictably soulful big number "Twelve Baa Blues." (The inspirational tune "Stronger Than This" is too self-consciously intended to inspire.)

They waste those few good songs and a solid cast. Jef Canter has as much fun as possible in multiple roles as King Saul and others. Trista Dollison is saddled with tired cliches in her part but comes out of it with her dignity intact and makes you almost believe her songs are good. Jill Shackner is notably flat in the dialogue scenes, though anyone would have a hard time with the book and is not the strongest singer. But the two leads are talented. Gerard Canonico does his best as the petulant Goliath and Bryan Welnicki has the looks and voice of a burgeoning pop star indeed.

It would take a miracle to turn *Stand Tall* into a good musical. But I have faith that with diligence and hard work that the team that delivered the handful of strong tunes sprinkled throughout is capable of much better.

THE THEATER SEASON 2012-2013 (on a four star scale)

As You Like it (Shakespeare In The Park w Lily Rabe) ****

Chimichangas And Zolofit *

Closer Than Ever ***

Cock ** 1/2

Harvey with Jim Parsons *

My Children! My Africa! ***

Once On This Island ***

Potted Potter *

Storefront Church ** 1/2

Title And Deed ***

Picture Incomplete (NYMF) **

Flambe Dreams (NYMF) **

Rio (NYMF) **

The Two Month Rule (NYMF) *

Trouble (NYMF) ** 1/2

Stealing Time (NYMF) **

Requiem For A Lost Girl (NYMF) ** 1/2

Re-Animator The Musical (NYMF) ***

Baby Case (NYMF) ** 1/2

How Deep Is The Ocean (NYMF) ** 1/2

Central Avenue Breakdown (NYMF) ***

Foreverman (NYMF) * 1/2



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Swing State (NYMF) * 1/2
Stand Tall: A Rock Musical (NYMF) * 1/2
Living With Henry (NYMF) *
A Letter To Harvey Milk (NYMF) ** 1/2

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

Note: Michael Giltz is provided with free tickets to shows with the understanding that he will be writing a review.

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