

InsideVero

Riverside season opens with “The Bikini.” Don’t miss the second half!



<https://indianrivertoday.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/the-bikini.jpg>

JANIE GOULD

Riverside Theatre opened its 41st season Tuesday night with “The Bikinis,” a musical that took the audience back through the 1960s and into the disco age of the 1970s by presenting some of the best known pop songs of the day, along with some long-forgotten dance crazes. Anyone remember the Watusi or Pony?

“The Bikinis” are a fictional group of singers on the Jersey shore who broke up 20 years ago. Now, the ladies are back together to give a benefit concert in an effort to save the Sandy Shores Mobile Home Beach Resort from being acquired for high-end development. Sandy Shores is also fictional, but is

based on what nearly happened to the existing Briny Breezes mobile home community in Palm Beach County.

The four singers show they can still belt out the hits beloved by the generation that came of age in the 60s. Some baby boomers in the audience probably remembered where they were when they heard “Be My Baby,” for example, made famous by the Ronettes in 1963; “Heatwave,” a 1967 hit for Martha and the Vandellas; or “Mama Said (There’d be Days Like This),” a 1961 hit by the Shirelles. Maybe some folks got a mental image of the stack of 45s they used to keep in their bedroom next to the record player and transistor radio.

Dialogue was heavy on references to artifacts of the 1960s, too. The girls talked excitedly about getting an “extension phone” for their bedrooms and hoped it would be a Princess! They chattered about Dick Clark’s American Bandstand, the dance show millions of teens watched on black and white TV every day after school.

The “Bikinis” also danced up a storm, showing moves from the Limbo, the Freddie — Anyone remember “Do the Freddie” by Freddie and the Dreamers? — the Monkey and of course, the Twist, made famous by Chubby Checkers. A few audience members gyrated on stage like Checkers, or tried to.

The audience thinned out after intermission, but the most compelling material came in the second act. The focus was on music and images – remember peace signs? — that set the tone for the upheavals of the late 1960s, from flower power and hippies and the Summer of Love to Woodstock and the Vietnam War.

Ray Roderick is the play’s director, choreographer and co-writer. The other writer is James Hindman. “The Bikinis” star Valerie Fagan as Annie; Katy Blake as Barbara; Karyn Quackenbush as Karla; and Joanna Young as Jodi.

“The Bikinis” runs through Nov. 16 on the Stark Stage at Riverside. Performances are Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., with matinees on Wednesdays, select Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m.

Tickets start at \$35 and can be purchased by calling the box office at 772-231-6990 or by going online to www.riversidetheatre.com (<http://www.riversidetheatre.com>).