



INDIAN RIVER COUNTY



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joanna Young, Karyn Quackenbush, Valerie Fagan and Katy Blake are the New Jersey foursome known as "The Bikinis," performing through Nov. 16 at the Riverside Theatre in Vero Beach.

'The Bikinis' at Riverside Theatre uses music to do storytelling

Lois Bowman could not sit still.

The 58-year-old Vero Beach resident was dancing in her seat for almost all of the two-hour performance of "The Bikinis," which opened the Riverside Theatre's 2014-15 season Tuesday evening. It was Bowman's first time seeing a Riverside show.

"It was really nice — but I'm a Jersey girl!" said Bowman. "It was like a bunch of little shows within a show, and the girls complemented each other very well."

The girls are actresses Joanna Young, Karyn Quackenbush, Valerie Fagan and Katy Blake, who portray an all-girl music group called The Bikinis, which achieved limited, local success on the boardwalk of the Jersey Shore in the early 1960s.

Based on the true story of the Briny Breezes Mobile Home Park in Palm Beach County, the two-act play features the foursome reuniting on New Year's Eve 1999 to save a Florida mobile home park from developers.

Billed as a musical beach party, the storyline never developed, relying heavily on one-liners that got easy laughs. The back story of the fight to save



GINNY BEAGAN

REVIEW

the trailer park only set the stage for what turned out to be an all-girl revue covering iconic music from 1964 through the 1970s.

The performance lacked the sets and costumes I've come to expect from one of Florida's most prominent producing theaters.

The set was a simple boardwalk and two small vintage cabanas strung with old-fashioned, fat bulb Christmas lights from days past. It never changed.

The women dressed in black, made quick onstage changes of their shirts and a few hats. Nothing more.

The energy level in the theater was at its highest when audience members were called upon to join the actresses on stage for some dance moves in Act I.

Act II opened with a touching moment when a slideshow of Vietnam War photos served as a backdrop as the talented singers covered "Time of The Season." But a dozen or

THE BIKINIS

What: A '60s Musical Beach Party

When: 7:30 p.m., 8 p.m. & 2 p.m. show times through Nov. 16

Where: Riverside Theatre, 3250 Riverside Park Drive, Vero Beach

Tickets: \$35-\$82.

Contact: 772-231-6990 or www.riversidetheatre.com.



more audience members missed out on the moving tribute because they did not return after intermission.

Harvey King of Fort Pierce regularly attends Riverside's productions. The 71-year-old was not surprised by the smaller production.

"It's the start of the season," said King. "It will get better."

#TCPalmSocial columnist Ginny Beagan writes about art and entertainment on the Treasure Coast. Contact her at ginny.beagan@tcpalm.com, at 772-223-4732 or follow her on twitter @GinnyBeagan.