

Fiddler on the Roof Rehearsal

Morgan Hill Times | Lora Schraft/Chief Photographer



Esteban Zapiain, playing the role of the fiddler, performs during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of Fiddler on the Roof.



Robert Barham, playing the role of the Rabbi, performs with members of the cast of Fiddler on the Roof during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production.



Elizabeth Calisi, playing the role of Golde, and Maureen Haney, playing the role of Yente, the matchmaker, perform during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of Fiddler on the Roof.



Members of the cast of Fiddler on the Roof perform a musical number during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production.



Members of the cast of *Fiddler on the Roof* perform during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production.



Ken Powell, playing the role of Lazar Wolf, the butcher, and Alan Chipman, playing the role of Tevye, the dairyman, perform during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.



Heidi Oliphant, playing the role of Chava, performs during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of Fiddler on the Roof.



From left, Heidi Oliphant, playing the role of Chava, Mandy Heiser, playing the role of Tzeitel, and Sarah Oliphant, playing the role of Hodel, perform during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of Fiddler on the Roof.



Sarah Oliphant, playing the role of Hodel, performs during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.



Alan Chipman, playing the role of Tevye, the dairyman, performs during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of Fiddler on the Roof.

The Gilroy Dispatch, Tuesday, July 9, 2013
by *Camille Bounds*

The audience at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse received South Valley's Civic Theatre production of "Fiddler on the Roof" - the final production of the season - with well deserved kudos. If this is an example of what is coming next season, run – don't walk – to purchase next season's tickets. This was an extremely well done show with an excellent cast. This wonderful piece of theatre is reincarnated with exuberance and energy, and is a joy to watch.

The winner of nine 1965 Tony Awards and the 1965 New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, "Fiddler" comes to us with heartwarming honesty and innocence. Opening on Broadway Sept. 24, 1964, "Fiddler" is playing to a new generation and has the record of one of the longest running shows in Broadway musical history.

Alan Chipman excelled as Tevye, the village milkman who talks with God on a best friend basis, while holding on to his religious instincts. He brought a credibility to the part and obviously loved playing this role. His timing in areas that could have been overdone were handled masterfully. His fine voice and energy made for a rich melodic addition to the role.

Elizabeth Calisi brought a beautiful voice and a great chemistry to Golda, Tevye's wife. There was just enough tartness and tenderness to make her enjoyable. She and Chipman were a great pair, especially in "Do You Love Me," where Tevye asks her to validate her love.

The original Jerome Robbins' choreography was deftly transferred by choreographer Mitzie Imagawa.

Directors Coleen Blanchard, James Chapman and Tam Piper kept the production moving at just the right pace and scenes appear to blend into one another like a rainbow that keeps changing colors. Sets, lighting, sound and costumes were well done (though please replace all beards, other than Tevye's).

Joseph Stein based the play on a collection of stories by Sholom Aleichem called "Tevye's Daughters," a story about the trials and tribulations of Tevye and his five daughters in a small Russian village. The threads of tradition, revolution, bigotry and love are woven into a warm, charming story of survival and an ability to be flexible in almost everything. Tevye knows things are changing and he knows he must reluctantly change with the times. He does this with great difficulty and intimate conversations with God.

The music by Jerry Bock and lyrics by Sheldon Harnik celebrate the true meaning of musical perfection. This is one show you will most certainly walk out of humming one of many tunes that wrap around your brain, where they will be instilled forever. Who can forget the heartwarming "Sunrise Sunset" or the lusty "If I were a Rich Man" that Chipman makes his own. No lyric is wasted, no note of music is squandered. Everything, musically, is in just the right place at all times.

This production closed June 29, but hopefully SVCT will include it in another season very soon.

Cultural opportunity for South Valley

Morgan Hill Times

Posted: Tuesday, June 4, 2013 4:00 pm

by *Chuck Flagg*

“Fiddler on the Roof” is a perennially popular musical that opened on Broadway in 1964. The first musical in U.S. history to surpass 3,000 performances, it won nine Tony awards and went on to hit performances in London and elsewhere. A successful movie version followed in 1971, and the show has enjoyed enduring popularity.

Set in pre-revolutionary Russia in 1905, the story concerns life in a small Jewish village as its inhabitants cope with persecution by the Tsar and Orthodox Christians. Its enduring theme is the conflict between tradition and a hostile society.

This month the local theatre group South Valley Civic Theatre is presenting 11 performances of it over four weekends at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse (17090 Monterey St.). The show should have an authentic feel because Rabbi Debbie Israel of Morgan Hill's Congregation Emeth is acting as a consultant on the show, helping with accuracy of prayers and accents. In addition, the Congregation has made available several Jewish ritual items to increase the show's realism.

Because some 90 percent of the ancestors of today's American Jews came from small villages similar to Anatekva, the fictional town where the play is set, this could be a unique opportunity for South Valley residents to learn about a culture different from our own.

Congregation Emeth and SVCT have worked together to offer a special matinee performance at 2:30 p.m. Sunday. This singular special event, “A Jewish Cultural Experience,” will include the live production of “Fiddler” as well as an explanation of the historical and cultural background behind the story and its characters.

The lobby will contain multimedia displays portraying the cultural and religious life of the “shtetls,” the small towns where European Jews lived in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The displays will highlight how religion and tradition created commonalities in spite of geographic differences. Information will be presented about such important aspects as:

- Language (Yiddish)
- Foods
- Family and community
- Religious observances
- Conditions that led to the demise of these communities through immigration to the United States.

An extended intermission will allow the audience a chance to sample Ashkenazi (German-Eastern European) cuisine such as potato latkes, mandelbrot, babka, herring in sour cream, knishes and kasha varnishkes.

After the performance, there will be an opportunity to engage in a short discussion with the cast.

Although “Fiddler on the Roof” has been one of the most popular musicals in history, these cultural and educational components should enhance even further the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the performance.

Additional details and tickets for the special matinee performance Sunday are available at www.emeth.net/fiddler. Proceeds will benefit Congregation Emeth's education programs. Tickets for the other performances of the play by South Valley Community Theatre are available from Booksmart (80 E. Second St.), at the door or at www.brownpapertickets.com.

Chuck Flagg is a retired teacher with a passion for religion. Reach him at cflagg@svnewspapers.com.