

# GREER FIRESTONE

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2010

## New Candlelight Dinner Theatre - All Shook Up

New Candlelight Theatre has gone political; a first for live theatre in Delaware. The current production, "All Shook Up," a rollicking rock n' roll romp rooted in the music of Elvis, would hardly be conjured as a platform for R and D discourse.

How does Aisle Say come to this conclusion? Why else would director Chris Alberts parade Mayor Matilda Hyde (Gerri Weagraff) as a small town Sarah Palin? Weagraff's very humorous impersonation certainly gives Tina Fey a run for her money...and even the former Governor/present FaceBook gadfly herself, you betcha! Weagraff talks down to her stage husband Sheriff Earl (Joe Kinsolving) just as you would suspect Palin barks at her own hubby.

Weagraff is even costumed in a red (state) suit, Palin's color of choice. (This is her 41st show at Candlelight. )

Paul Weagraff joins his wife on stage as a father who could have used some quality time watching Dick Clark's American Bandstand. Weagraff's character dances as one might imagine Dustin Hoffman's character doing so in "Rainman."

Let us dispense with analysis of the plot, it being as diaphanous as the wings of a butterfly; as substantial as cotton candy.

But the full crowd on opening night (including two bus tours) was not there for sturm und drang. They were there for the music and the show is a compilation of Elvis' greatest hits. Shoehorned into the plot are "Jailhouse Rock," "Heartbreak Hotel," "Hound Dog," "Blue Suede Shoes," "Can't Help Falling in Love" and "Burning Love," among others.

Readers may recall that NCT dissolved its relationship with Actors Equity; an albatross in these financial times. The transition to this first show after the break is seamless on all levels of stage craft. It's very evident the entire ensemble loves to perform.

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While the dancers were enthusiastic in every number, choreographer Dann Dunn's body of work in this production was neither as tight nor as creative as with his past work at NCT.

Chad (Rick Fountas) wisely did not attempt a caricature of The King. Fountas has a well-situated rock voice, great leading man stage presence and has sung in similar rock shows such as "JC Superstar," "Joseph...Dreamcoat" and "Pippin."

Two vocal standouts are both newcomers to NCT. Sylvia (Erienne Poole) has a soaring soprano. Her credits include Effie in "Dreamgirls." Effie sings "And I Tell You I'm Not Going", one of the all time Broadway show stoppers. The NCT audience witnessed some of that power in "There's Always Me."

Natalie Hailer/Ed (Sara Schmuckler) plays a cross dresser. Why? (See above for my analysis of this profound and pithy plot.) More importantly, the actor can sing. She does estimable work with Elvis' canon. Her voice has a vibrant edge to it. "Fools Fall in Love" was her finest.

Lorraine (Alexis DeDonato) began with NCT as a dancer. Over the past few shows Aisle Say has seen her evolve into a fine singer and comedienne.

Jim Weber, former music director of Three Little Bakers', is MD for the show.

Group rates available.

Until June 19. [NewCandlelightTheatre.com](http://NewCandlelightTheatre.com) 475.2313

POSTED BY GREER FIRESTONE AT 12:14 PM

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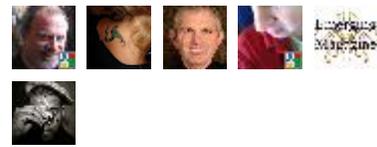
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GREER FIRESTONE  
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UNITED STATES

Written 2 Gershwin  
musical revues that

have been produced  
nationally. GERSHWIN, by  
GEORGE: The 1936 Radio Show and  
EMBRACEABLE GEORGE. Am  
presently finishing a Garland revue,  
JUDY GARLAND "World's Greatest  
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Tat-Tat-Tat Musical. Written a  
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