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THE LAST FIVE YEARS

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Written by Noel Smith



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A triumph of performance, music, and storytelling



Most stories are told from beginning to end, and others are told by showing the end first, and then revealing how they got there. The Musical, *The Last Five Years*, tells its story forwards and backwards at the same time—successfully.

Wonderful performances by Ariel Buck and Andrew Ceglio make this a must-see theater experience. Cathy (Ariel Buck) begins her story at the end of their five-year romance and marriage while Jamie (Andrew Ceglio) begins his story in the throws of newfound

love. One character's success is contrasted with the other's search for recognition, which finally, after five years, leads to the end of their relationship.

The Last Five Years is a one-act song-cycle by Tony Award winning composer Jason Robert Brown. His unique structure in the unfolding of the story brings an intriguing complexity to this boy-meets-girl production. As a two-character musical play, its charm lies in the artful writing. Brown's songs are melodic, witty, and full of literate lyrics that are worth delving into.

The play is like a mini-opera, in that there are no spoken lines. Ceglio and Buck tell the story with their singing, showing their unique vocal and acting talents by using a marvelous range of styles and emotional expressions. Their performances poignantly tell this story of love found and lost. The two are accompanied by a semi-classical musical score of strings piano, and guitar.

Jamie and Cathy interact in the same time frame only during their wedding song in the middle of the musical play. This unique structure enhances the storyline and highlights the age-old conflict between love and career in a touching, funny and emotionally moving love story.

Ariel Buck has delighted Cabrillo Stage audiences with her past performances in "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change!" as Fraulein Kost in "Cabaret", as Christmas Past and Mrs. Cratchit in 2009's production of "Scrooge" and as Audrey in "Little Shop of Horrors."

Andrew Ceglio, now a resident of Capitola, returns to the Cabrillo Stage as one of its favorite performers after his past roles as Cliff Bradshaw in "Cabaret", the Scarecrow in "Wizard of Oz", Herod in "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and Seymour in "Little Shop of Horrors."

The stars, Ceglio and Buck, met at Cabrillo Stage in 2007, when they starred opposite each other in *Little Shop of Horrors*. They fell in love, and ironically, this summer is their fifth anniversary!

Cabrillo's Black Box theater is the perfect venue for such an intimate production. It brings the audience into emotional and almost physical contact. During this one-act performance, the actors never leave the stage. Costume and scene changes are made right there in front of the audience. The music and the wonderful accompaniment by the musicians are amazing as it lifts the play into another level as it emphasizes the emotional content of the acting.

This is a theatrical experience you shouldn't miss as Cabrillo Stage celebrates 30 years of bringing marvelous entertainment to our community.