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'Swing!' comes to Cabrillo

By WALLACE BAINE
Posted: 06/24/2010 12:10:33 PM PDT

Attention, music fans who were young adults in the 1940s and those who wish they were: Welcome to your heaven.

"Swing!" is a big, brash Broadway extravaganza that is just about the best thing lovers of the swing music of the big-band era can hope for, at least until someone invents a time machine. And it's coming live to a theater near you.

That theater is the Crocker Theater on the campus of Cabrillo College, and the show is presented by Cabrillo Stage as part of its ambitious new season. It opens Friday for a three-week engagement.

"Swing!" is for music purists, in that it features no dialogue and really no story, at least not in a traditional way. It's just one famous song after another, from such famous dramatists as Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and Count Basie, all presented by a smokin' jazz band and a collection of gifted dancers.

"In the Mood," "Harlem Nocturne," "Caravan," "Cry Me a River," "I Got a Gal in Kalamazoo," "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing," ... we could go on all night, and "Swing!" practically does, with a greatest-hits approach designed to provide a compelling visual element to go with all that great music.

"This has been a show on my list for a long time," said Janie Scott, the veteran Cabrillo Stage director and choreographer who is directing "Swing!" "I have always been a huge fan of swing in general. It's just so fun and so life-affirming."

Scott approaches the show from a dance angle, and

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accordingly she's assembled a group of the finest dancers in the Bay Area to show off the great moves of the swing era. One of the numbers of the show is even called "Throw That Girl Around" and, indeed, the show's dancing borders on acrobatics.

"The caliber of dancers we have for this show is amazing," said Scott. "It's wonderful to come to it not tied with any kind of limitations when it comes to talent."

Scott will use the amenities of the new Crocker Theater to its full potential. The new stage allows her to move the band to the foreground and the background at will, putting the musicians in the mix as part of the show's choreography.

"Swing!" also serves as a virtual showcase for mid 20th-century dance styles from Latin swing to ballroom to tap to Western swing to, of course, the famous "Lindy Hop,"--there's even a dream ballet sequence," said Scott "" all done to swingin' period costumes and an Art Deco set.

"When you get into a room with a really good swing band and dancers," she said, "I dare you to resist it and not have it raise your blood pressure."

IF YOU GO

'swing!' when: Opening Friday, runs through July 18. Preview, tonight. Most showtimes are 7:30 p.m.

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where: Crocker Theater, Cabrillo College, Aptos
 Cost: \$16 to \$34 adults; discounts for seniors and children; group rates and package plans apply
 details: For dates, showtimes and ticket prices, go to www.cabrillostage.com or call 479-6154

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