



F#@king Up Everything

nytheatre.com review

[Maura Kelley](#) · October 7, 2009

From the first heavy metal chord of this show's opening title song, "F#@king Up Everything," I thought, "this show deserves to be playing in a bigger theatre." The show has a lot going for it: a talented cast with strong voices, a rockin' band, and quirky exciting music and lyrics by David Eric Davis. The story rings quite similar to ones we've seen before.

The first act sets up the multiple love interests. A geeky, neurotic puppeteer named Christian (Noah Weisberg) is desperately in love with the beautiful, aspiring singer, song-writer Juliana (Kate Rockwell). Jake (Neil Haskell), the bad boy lead singer of the band and best friend to Christian, is also targeting Juliana. Christian's overly neurotic and constant self-deprecating attempts to woo Juliana are played so capably and comically that I found myself rooting for Jake, aptly played by Haskell as Juliana's better romantic option, at least in the beginning of the show. Ivy, a close friend of Juliana's, played by cute Jenna Coker-Jones, harbors a secret crush for Jake while remaining stuck in an unfulfilled relationship with Tony (Leif Huckman), bass guitarist and pot-smoking fiend. Jones and Huckman are both strong actors and Coker-Jones sings a heartfelt rendition of "If He Were Mine." But I have to admit when the first act ended I was surprised it was so short, disappointed it was over, and couldn't wait for more.

Some things I didn't find plausible. Christian seems to forgive his friend Jake too easily for hooking up with Juliana and then takes his advice on how to get a girl in "Guys Like Me." And no one ever seems the least bit worried when pothead Tony spends all of his days and nights stoned. As things toward the end of the show are tying up, you'd think by the title, *F#@king up Everything*, that the events might be a little more f#@ed up, outlandish, and crazy. I definitely thought there was room to go further. I did enjoy, however, that after Christian made a mistake there was a reprise of the "F#@king Up Everything" song.

I wished Rockwell got to finish her song, "Falling," because she was doing such a nice job with it and we were finally getting to see her. Rockwell seemed to be playing everything shy and safe which may have hurt the potential chemistry between her and Weisberg a bit.

A major highlight in the second act occurs when Broadway veteran Liz Larsen, who plays Arielle, the cougar and booking manager, devours the stage with her presence. The opening moment of "Arielle's Areolas" (which I'll leave to your imagination) is quite hysterically played by Weisberg and Haskell. But one of the biggest surprises of the evening is the dazzling and sexy drummer, John Rochette, who has a very small scene with the stoner, Tony. The tension and chemistry between the two of them for that page and a half of dialogue is genuine and the actors take their time with the comic moments. I would have loved to have seen the characters of Arielle and the unnamed drummer incorporated more into the show.

Overall, the show is quite enjoyable and charmingly performed by a talented cast. I truly hope it has legs to move to a bigger venue where it can loudly shine as a rock musical, with better sound which sometimes was a problem. Special mention goes to David Valentine for his ingenious puppets.

VENUE

[45th Street Theatre](#)

OPENED

October 6, 2009

CLOSES

October 16, 2009

CREATORS &

ARTISTS

Music & Lyrics By

David Eric Davis

Book By

Sam Forman and David Eric Davis