

## Theater Review: The Marvelous Wonderettes

by [Cynthia Corral](#)

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### The Marvelous Wonderettes



San Jose Repertory Theatre

Starring Holly Davis, Christina DeCicco, Bets Malone, Lowe Taylor

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(l to r) Cindy Lou (Christina DeCicco), Betty Jean (Holly Davis), Missy (Lowe Taylor) and Suzy (Bets Malone) are *The Marvelous Wonderettes*

The San Jose Repertory Theatre just finished a fantastic 2009-2010 season, and they have no intention of disappointing us during the summer break either. ***The Marvelous Wonderettes*** is a truly darling show, and a perfect way to spend a hot summer evening.

The characters of Suzy, Betty Jean, Missy and Cindy Lou make up the singing team of *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, and in the first act they are thrilled to have been chosen to perform at their 1958 Senior Prom. Through dialog and the lyrics of the songs they sing we hear about their hopes and dreams, and their conflicts with each other.

Each of the women have big, individual personalities and it was great fun watching them work as a singing team while also explaining their problems with love and with each other. There is

also a great deal of audience participation that kept everyone involved and a part of the show. An audience member is chosen to portray Mr. Lee, the teacher one of the girls has a great crush on, and the entire audience gets involved in the voting for Prom Queen.

There is a 20 minute intermission and then we see the women at their ten year reunion where things have changed. For better or worse? This show follows the musical standard of the first act being very light-hearted and the second act showing a slightly darker side. But have no fear, *The Marvelous Wonderettes* are a joyful group and even in the face of broken or underachieved dreams they find a way to stay upbeat and lean on each other for support.

I loved this show. I had had a long day at work and really wasn't in the mood to see a show that looked too similar to all the Lawrence Welk shows I had to watch as a kid on Sunday evenings. But *The Marvelous Wonderettes* are closer to a 1950's style "Glee" than Lawrence Welk, and my date and I left the theatre with smiles on our faces and a tear or two in our eyes. The women are a Breakfast Club of characters, and I would bet that most females in the audience could relate well to at least one of the characters. The audience was filled with a much wider age range than usual, with everyone from senior citizens to small children who were thrilled when Cindy Lou (Christina DeCicco) went into the audience to receive their prom queen ballots. Although the girls are dealing with broken hearts and betrayals, it is done in a touching but hilarious way. Bets Malone as Suzy has some of the worst problems in act two but is the funniest of the bunch. And even though the stage set was decorated heavily in lollipop pink, I believe the men in the audience had just as much fun as all the females.

The music is all from the 1950s and 1960s, and though all ages will be familiar with most of the songs, knowing them previously is not important. The characters from these old narrative tunes suddenly come to life as the women use the songs as dialog to explain their hopes and dreams. The ubiquitous "Johnny" especially gets a lot of lyric time, and even the songs we know well take on a whole new meaning when they are personalized by these lovely women. Needless to say, the singing is incredible and I could listen to any of the four — Bets Malone, Holly Davis, Christina DeCicco and Lowe Taylor — sing every day of the week.

The show was darling, and it was an especially nice show to watch after a long day at work. All four girls held my attention through the entire show (though my eyes were usually stuck on the beautiful Cindy Lou) and I was really glad I was given the chance to see it. It is only playing through June 27 so hurry to [get your tickets](#) before they are gone!

*The Marvelous Wonderettes*

*San Jose Repertory Theatre*

*3.5 out of 5 stars*

*Starring Holly Davis, Christina DeCicco, Bets Malone, Lowe Taylor*

*Through June 27*

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