



Courtesy photo

“Forbidden Broadway” opening at Roxy’s Downtown on July 12, skewers classics such as “Fiddler on the Roof,” “Hello Dolly” and “Cats,” as well as newer titles like “Mamma Mia,” “Rent” and “Hairspray.”

Roxy’s Downtown stages parodies of Broadway musicals in ‘Forbidden Broadway’

BY DAVID BURKE
Eagle correspondent

“Forbidden Broadway,” which opens next week for a seven-week run at Roxy’s Downtown, both salutes and satirizes generations of musical theater.

Culled from 21 editions of the revue that ran off-Broadway from 1982 to 2014, “Forbidden Broadway” skewers classics such as “Fiddler on the Roof,” “Hello Dolly” and “Cats,” as well as newer titles like “Mamma Mia,” “Rent” and “Hairspray.”

There are also jabs at Broadway stars including Ethel Merman (where the Broadway diva meets “Phantom of the Opera”), Liza Minelli, Carol Channing and John Travolta.

“They’re just ridicu-

‘Forbidden Broadway’

When: 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, from July 12 to Aug. 24

Where: Roxy’s Downtown, 412 ½ E. Douglas, Wichita

Tickets: \$20-\$30, by calling Roxy’s at 316-265-4400

lously funny, and it’s impersonations of stars you know,” said Patty Reeder, one of the six-person cast.

Christine Tasheff, another cast member and former director of previous incarnations of Roxy’s and Cabaret Oldtown, has been a fan of “Forbidden Broadway” for years.

“I toyed with it when I

had a theater. I was nervous then that Wichita audiences wouldn’t be familiar enough with the shows,” she said. “But they’ve come a long ways.”

Reeder says there are no sacred cows in “Forbidden Broadway” – “I don’t think anything’s sacred when it comes to theater,” she added – and that the revue sets even the stuffiest musical productions, such as “Les Miserables,” on their ears.

“People love parody, they just love it,” Reeder said. “When you take something like ‘Les Mis’ that is so, so serious and make a parody of it, it’s pretty darned funny.”

Tasheff and Reeder are joined by Julia Faust, Seth Knowles, John Keckeisen and Shaun-Michael Morse in the cast.

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“There’s some pretty funny people in this show,” Tasheff added.

Familiarity with the Broadway canon helps in enjoying “Forbidden,” Reeder said, but is not a prerequisite.

“Everybody knows these melodies,” she said. “It’s not necessary that you really know the material that well because you’ll recognize it.”

The comedy is fast-paced, Tasheff added.

“All of the material is going to be familiar to people, the melodies,” she said. “It’s not going to be ‘Oh, I haven’t heard of that song.’ It doesn’t matter, because it’s so freakin’ funny and you don’t have to be theater savvy to get it.”

Successfully parodying Broadway greats means trying to mimic the sometimes-difficult scores, Tasheff and Reeder said.

“The music is pretty challenging,” Tasheff said. “Everybody is working really hard on their parts, but there’s intricate harmonies and intricate rhythms.”

“It’s tougher than it looks,” Reeder added. “But we have moments when we’re all just hysterical, laughing.”