



THEATER THEATRE REVIEW

Rock & Roll Rebel

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by Cindy Hemper

During the mid to late 1950s a new sound, a new feel, and a new energy called Rock & Roll took the country by storm, and ultimately, the world. While the seeds of the music may have been in place for decades, they flowered in the mid-1950s. With the blending of country music, rhythm and



blues, gospel, and a splash of boogie-woogie, Rock & Roll was here to stay.

This past Saturday night the Academy Theatre in Meadville PA hosted the World Premier event of a new original theatrical musical entitled "Edge Of Reality". While the play is rooted in the birth of Rock & Roll, it focuses mainly on the influences and fuel that Elvis Presley gave to the creation of the genre.

Through a kaleidoscope woven of nothing more than well-chosen words and music, "Edge Of Reality" is a one-act play that focuses on a lonely boy from Tupelo, Mississippi, who rose from lowliness to wow the world with his boyish charm, talent, and faithful spirit, becoming not only the KING of Memphis, Tennessee, but the KING of what would come to be known as Rock n' Roll, and the world.

The play Stars Nick Opsanic as Elvis and Eric Stuedler, as an unnamed reporter. "Edge Of Reality" spans from the mid-1950s through 1960 and follows not only the birth of Rock & Roll, but the birth of the KING of Rock & Roll.

Opsanic's performance as Elvis was simply outstanding. With a super high energy overall performance, giving spot-on signature Elvis moves, Opsanic surely made you feel like you had gone back in time and were actually in attendance of a live 50s Elvis show. Very noteworthy were Opsanic's vocals that were uncannily similar to the voice of the King himself.

Although the show was built very minimalisticly, using only a mic stand, 2 chairs, and a table and lighting, still it had the real feel of a high-production value show. Though his part was limited to only one scene, Stuedler's performance as a reporter interviewing Elvis while stationed in Germany was well acted.

The show also featured many of the most popular songs of the King's early career, from That's Alright and "Baby, Let's Play House" to several of his popular film hits such as "G.I. Blues", " Tonight Is So Right for Love" and "It Feels So Right", along with many others.

Summing up, this one-act, one-hour-and-a-half play was captivating, engulfed you with the spirit of the period, offered very interesting information about the time and facts about Elvis' early life and career using insightful voiceover monologs, and was all very well thought out and creative, and truly one of the most entertaining evening that I've spent in quite a while. For more information about this play, future performances, and bookings, please contact the BlackBox Theatre Group at 814-873-5069 or email them at blackboxtheatre@uamgi.org

← **Indi Film Takes Center Stage This Weekend**

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We appreciate your questions and comments and look forward to hearing from you.

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