

Williamston's 'The Big Bang' is pure madcap fun

Written by Ken Glickman For the Lansing State Journal
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Jed (Zev Steinberg) as Tokyo Rose, Jeff English and Boyd (Matthew Gwynn) as Shanghai Lil in 'The Big Bang' at the Williamston Theatre. / Photo by Chris Purchis

If you go

“The Big Bang” musical

- **When:** 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays through

Aug. 17 at Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St.

- **Tickets:** \$20-\$25 (discounts for seniors, students and military) at 655-7469.

Don't be confused. The TV show “The Big Bang Theory” has nothing to do with the soon-to-be hit at the Williamston Theatre, “The Big Bang” — other than they're both very funny.

For its last show of the year, Williamston Theatre has chosen a wild, hysterically funny, and thoroughly entertaining two-man show about the excesses of Broadway.

“The Big Bang” is a no-holds-barred take on two writers of a Broadway show, trying to get rich folk to invest in their newest creation. “Bang” is somewhat autobiographical (music by Jed Feurer, book and lyrics by Boyd Graham). The two characters have the authors' actual names and at the first performance back in 1999, the writers played themselves.

Directed brilliantly by Rob Roznowski, “Bang” goes a million miles an hour — faster than any chase scene in a blockbuster movie.

The action takes place in a borrowed fancy apartment on Park

Avenue and Boyd (Mathew Gwynn) and Jed (Zev Steinberg) proceed to perform the entire new musical to entice us, the investors, to pony up the \$500 million they need to bring it to Broadway.

Sound like a lot of cash? That's because this extravaganza is the entire history of civilization, from the beginning of time to the present. Music director Jeff English is on stage at the keyboard and tries valiantly to keep up with the mega-watt energy of Gwynn and Steinberg — but that's almost impossible.

Never slowing down for an instant, this goofy and slapstick tour de force jumps from songs about Adam and Eve, the lion who eats the Christians, Attila the Hun, the Middle Ages (where everyone is in their 40s), Henry VIII, the Far East and many others.

Steinberg and Boyd are masterful as they grab props (perfectly created by Bruce Bennett) from the all over the set to represent all of these locales.

Over the period of 90 minutes, these two actors play dozens of characters, each with its own zany costume of feathers, umbrellas used as a skirt, fans, or even a clock for a hat.

The songs are all fast-paced with lyrics that are so clever and witty that you won't stop laughing from one minute to the next.

All of these shenanigans require disciplined actors who dance, sing, mime, mug, and capture a new mood in a flash

They are both very good in this madcap farce, but Steinberg overshadows Gwynn with his strong voice and great comic timing.

Gwynn displays superb comic chops, but his voice sounded weak and straining. Clearly the pace of this show would test the most experienced singer.

“Big Bang” is all about fun, laughs and entertainment — and it proves to be the perfect mid-summer amusement.

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