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## REVIEW: "The Big Bang"

Williamston Theatre

## Explosive comedy

By Daniel Skora

Posted: July 24, 2014 at 9:53 a.m.

Astronomers tell us that the universe began over 13 billion years ago with the explosion of an infinitesimally small particle. They say that all things that have ever been and will ever come to be were contained in that particle and the Big Bang, as contain the seeds that germinated into the fast-paced musical comedy "The Big Bang," currently being presented at the Williamston Theatre, is anybody's guess. But it should be noted that the universe would certainly be a lesser place had it not.

"The Big Bang" is a primordial soup of a play, which, incidentally, is a theory of how life began on earth. "The Big Bang"'s got music, parody, men in drag, audience involvement (sort of) and a timeline that stretches from the precise moment the Big Bang occurred down through the present.

Two guys named Jed and Boyd, also the names of the show's creators, Jed Feuer, who wrote the music, and Boyd Graham, the book and lyrics, are writers looking to strike it big on Broadway. They've written a musical that covers the entire history of the world, and they're looking for investors.

Cash is needed, because the musical has a budget that contains more zeros than the final scores of a season's worth of soccer games. The show has hundreds of performers, thousands of costumes and wigs, elaborate sets involving helicopters and intricate machinery, and a running time of 12 hours (four separate performances, three hours each). What Jed and Boyd are presenting to their investors (and the Williamston audience) is an 80-minute, no intermission condensed version of their show in the well-appointed living room on loan for the occasion from the vacationing Dr. and Mrs. Sid Lipbalm.

"The Big Bang" takes a zany look at some of the most famous personages in world history: Adam and Eve, Nefertiti, Columbus and Queen Isabella, Napoleon and Josephine, and Eva Braun are just a few of those skewered. The show seems to have a preponderance of female characters, like Gandhi's mother and the Virgin Mary, probably because there's more humor to be squeezed out of a skit where the guys play women, especially when one of them has a beard.

The show is blessed with two very talented funny men. Zev Steinberg (the bald one) as Jed has the look and feel of a true comic-in-the-making. His program headshot from the brow down bears more than a passing resemblance to Billy Crystal, and there are flashes of Jerry Lewis' brilliance in his onstage performance. Matthew Gwynn (the bearded one), as Boyd is hardly less talented and matches Zev laugh for laugh. If you're fortunate enough to have Zev show you to your seat (the theatrics begin even while the audience is being seated), you may hear him tell you, as he shows off the new reversible bowtie he is wearing, bought at a two-for-one sale, "It's like getting four ties for the price of one."

The songs in the show make for brisk musical vignettes. The song "Free Food and Frontal Nudity" sung by Adam and Eve as they wander around Paradise before the fall is just a sample of the direction the songs take. Music is provided by Jeff English, the onstage keyboardist who finds himself drawn into the actors' mayhem on more than several occasions.

Director Rob Roznowski has assembled a highly proficient crew to support his onstage performers: set design of the mod-ish Lipbalm apartment is by Kirk Domer (even the floor gets a delightfully patterned treatment); costumes are by Karen Kangas-Preston (and there's plenty of quick-change artistry during the show); and the props, which begin as room decorations but are quickly pressed into service as ersatz costuming, are by Bruce Bennett.

**SHOW DETAILS:** "The Big Bang" offers up an explosion of fun that's both historical and hysterical. The show runs through Aug. 17. Tickets are available by calling the box office at 517-655-7469. Additional information is available online at [www.williamstontheatre.org](http://www.williamstontheatre.org). The Williamston Theatre is located at 122 S. Putnam Street in Downtown Williamston, about 10 miles east of Lansing.

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### Performance Information

#### Show times

Thursday, July 10, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Friday, July 11, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Saturday, July 12, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Sunday, July 13, 2014 at 2:00 pm  
 Thursday, July 17, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Friday, July 18, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Saturday, July 19, 2014 at 3:00 pm  
 Saturday, July 19, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Sunday, July 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm  
 Thursday, July 24, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Friday, July 25, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Saturday, July 26, 2014 at 3:00 pm  
 Saturday, July 26, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Sunday, July 27, 2014 at 2:00 pm  
 Thursday, July 31, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Friday, August 1, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
 Saturday, August 2, 2014 at 3:00 pm  
 Saturday, August 2, 2014 at 8:00 pm

Sunday, August 3, 2014 at 2:00 pm  
Thursday, August 7, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
Friday, August 8, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
Saturday, August 9, 2014 at 3:00 pm  
Saturday, August 9, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
Sunday, August 10, 2014 at 2:00 pm  
Thursday, August 14, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
Friday, August 15, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
Saturday, August 16, 2014 at 3:00 pm  
Saturday, August 16, 2014 at 8:00 pm  
Sunday, August 17, 2014 at 2:00 pm



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