

Theater Review



PHOTO BY ZAC ROSSER

Red Brown, Jamie Reilly and Justin Polly perform a scene from the Off Square production of *Petticoat Rules* on Sunday at the Center Theater.

Professional *Petticoat* a must-see musical

Who: Off Square Theatre Company
What: *Petticoat Rules*
Where: Center Theater, 265 S. Cache St.
When: 8 p.m. through Sunday
How much: \$25
Web: www.offsquare.org

By Angus M. Thuermer Jr.

It's not every town that can have its history told in a musical written by Broadway songwriters and lyricists.

Not every town has a history as rich as Jackson's, however. Or a community that's rich enough to attract talent like Pam Drews Phillips and Mary Murfitt, composer and author respectively of *Petticoat Rules*, the story of Jackson Hole and its all-woman town government.

Add the stage talents of Nicole Madison (Rose Crabtree), Caryn Flanagan (Cissy Patterson) and the deservedly ubiquitous Jamie Reilly (Cal Carrington) and the result is a fantastic production.

If there's an empty seat in the house during the Jackson run of this delightful, entertaining and educational musical, somebody will be missing out. *Petticoat Rules* is original, professionally staged, locally relevant and a must-see for anyone with even a passing interest in Jackson Hole or its history.

Petticoat Rules is the story of one of the first all-women councils in the world, and of the love affair between an East Coast socialite and valley wrangler. Set in historic Jackson Hole, the action swirls around Patterson, the Countess of Flat Creek, and her amour, Carrington, a horseman and guide.

Their relationship grows as Patterson, a dudeen (the correct form of the word for female dude and is otherwise also historically accurate) cultivates her ties with newfound friends, including Carrington and Rose Crabtree.

Crabtree and a band of Jackson wives are upset with male governance that engineers a 1-foot culvert for a 2-foot ditch and seems content with muddy streets and widespread garbage. Eventually, with Patterson's encouragement, they run for office.

"Roosters crow, hens deliver," they campaign. And they win.

Meantime, Patterson discovers the enchantment of Jackson Hole through her guide, Carrington. Eventually, she buys his Flat Creek Ranch, but only after first stealing his heart.



NEWS&GUIDE PHOTO / PRICE CHAMBERS

Red Brown plays Henry Crabtree, and Nicole Madison plays his wife, Rose, who was a member of Jackson's all-woman town government.

This trio shines on-stage as Madison exercises her athletic voice, Flanagan exudes a vixen's charm, and Reilly struts and sings his buckskin-way along.

The cast supports the lead players through 19 original numbers that range from love songs to rags to company ensembles. A four-piece band leads the cast through the compositions, all of which marry catchy melodies with well-crafted, relevant lyrics.

While revolving around the all-woman government, the musical also tells the story of the valley's history, from Beaver Dick Leigh's saga to the expansion of Grand Teton National Park through Rockefeller family land purchases to the landslide that dammed the Gros Ventre River. These historic events are presented in didactic fashion; a narrator often stands up front and lectures the audience. But such episodes are brief and are woven into the flow of the production.

The cast is ably supported by its crew, well-directed by John Briggs and choreographed by Jeremy Benton. The set is simple and works easily to enable the show.

Petticoat Rules should expand beyond its Jackson audience. This production deserves to go on the road regionally.

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Where/Dónde:

St. John's Episcopal Church, Hansen Hall
 Jackson, WY

When/Cuándo:

Thursday, July 30, 2009/Jueves, 30 de julio, 2009
 4:00pm - 7:00pm

Latino Resource Center
 307-734-0333

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