

## Adventures in the Endless Pursuit of Entertainment

Blog by Sarah B.

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Tonight: Going Down Swingin' at the NYMF

Going Down Swingin' This is a GREAT show! Under the thoughtful and swiftly moving direction of Jenny Lord, it is smart and funny and has an unexpected twist. It is the story of the personalities of a 1950s radio program that is being phased out because of the growing popularity of television. It's star, played spot on by Christopher Shyer, is an aging crooner with demons he refuses to own up to. He knows that he is not cut out for television, but all those around him are more than willing to move genres. The work, words by Matt Boresi and music by Peter Hilliard, strikes me more as a play with music rather than a traditional musical. The dialogue is funny and with just the right amount of suspense, think Nick and Nora. The interspersed music seems like it is straight out of a standards playlist, but at the same time is impressively original. It is toe tapping and wonderfully performed by an ensemble cast, so perfectly cast that it's hard to imagine anybody else in these roles. The trio of female leads, Marla Schaffel, Meredith Patterson and Stacie Bono, capture the glamour of this 1950s period piece with a strong delivery of acting, comic timing and even better singing. Tom Deckman shows off his hilarious comedic skills as a aging "teenager", while James Stovall is completely believable as the black actor who dreams of breaking through the color barrier against the odds and Leo Ash Evens rounds out the male leads with just the right amount of angst as a rock-n-roll heartthrob with a secret.

A disillusioned friend of mine told me that he doesn't care if he ever sees another NYMF show again. Unfortunately, he didn't see this one. Going Down Swingin' deserves a long and healthy run in an off-Broadway theatre, possibly even a Broadway house with some upscale producing. It's freshly and wildly entertaining with a smart, old-fashioned stage musical play feel and will no doubt garner fans. I, for one, can't wait to see this show again.