

Fantasy World Adventures Mega Park! The Musical



“You call yourself ‘mega’, I see no such thing” is the perfect line to describe this rollercoaster crash.

With a catchy, if exceedingly long, title & a fun neon sign to complement the promotional material, I was looking forward to an hour of rollercoasters, fantasy adventures & toe-tapping beats to uplift a Sunday at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. But just like an unfortunately timed go on The Smiler, *Fantasy World Adventures Mega Park! The Musical* was an exceedingly painful experience. Complete with a long, & therefore rushed, script, forgettable songs & performers who despite being able to sing in tune, were all in different ones, this show was sadly not to live up to the experience it purported.

Reciting the script at a breakneck pace & with a song every other minute, the writing is a core area for this show’s shortcomings. I think the musical has fallen into that all too common trap of trying to do & say too much in too little time, leading to rapid scenes & transitions that bleed into both the preceding & following scenes. There was also little thematic consistency throughout the show, with the introduction of the ‘mystery mascot’, a competing corporation, & a romantic side plot that quite simply should have been left out (Pippa, babe, if he says he loves you & then does a scene literally two minutes later saying you’re overbearing, you can do so much better!).

But the final nail in the coffin of this show, that was already on life support, comes from the performers for half of whom must have been channelling the energy of the audience, through visibly wanting to be literally anywhere else. I’m not sure whether it is Fringe Fatigue, a long preparation process or the resignation of realising the material they are performing simply isn’t great, but when only half of the people in a cast of ten are truly putting their hearts (& lungs) into the lyrics, it is very obvious.

To that end, special tributes must be paid to Maeve Gallagher & Eliza Fox Melia as Pippa & Charlie, who must have terrible back problems from carrying this show for two weeks continuously. Both their vocals & energy shine throughout the show, genuinely putting their all into delivering a good performance, even with the challenges that their castmates’ vocals bring them.

Otherwise, worthy of praise are David Bygraves as Jason & Gee Case Watson as Barb; whilst their vocals aren’t spectacular, they make up for it in their performing ability. Both characters were the standouts for their depth, consistency & development, as well as the passion they brought, as a disinterested but talented work experience kid, & park veteran, respectively. There were also some good moments, particularly the mascot argument scene halfway through, that really showed some promise, & backstage departments also did a solid job, particularly in costume with an impressive number of slick quick changes.

I wanted to like this show, I still do, but I can't in good conscience say that *Fantasy World Adventures Mega Park! The Musical* lives up to the hype it has built for itself. Believing is half the battle, & with half the cast clearly not believing in their own material, it is no wonder that the audience doesn't either. There is some real talent in this company, & I'm excited to see what they do next, but it's time this musical had its final ride.