

## **BAT BOY The Musical**

Music and Lyrics by Laurence O'keefe

Story and Book by Keythe Farley & Bryan Flemming

The Foppish Dandies and Co.

40th Street Theatre

Nov. 16-Dec. 8, 2007

For times and tickets call (757)423-4084

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

We have movie musicals where songs are pushed into various scenes. Think "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels". We have juke box musicals where scenes are written around existing songs. Think "Momma Mia". Now we have the tabloid musical.

The story of Bat Boy first appeared in a tabloid called Weekly World News. It caught the eyes of the above named writers. The tale concerns a half-bat/half-boy creature found in a cave by three teenagers. It's the vampire sort of bat whose favorite soup du jour is blood. He is taken to the home of one of the children and the family adopts him. He is given the noble, king like name of Edgar. He learns to speak quite well and longs to be accepted by the community of Hope Falls, West Virginia. He is met with hostility and fear. As the plot unfolds, we encounter a fair amount of violence, incest, interspecies sex and, of course, blood. Edgar has to have sustenance after all and we see him enjoy a repast from a live rabbit, a cow and human beings. Probably best to leave the little ones home for this dramatic effort.

For this earnest, hard working, neophyte cast, the demands of this theatre piece are as overwhelming as a tsunami. First of all, it's a musical and most of them can't really sing. They try mighty hard but their off key renditions to a recorded sound track are painful to the ear. Not only are notes off kilter but lyrics are lost because of faulty diction. The directors failed to solve the transitions of this multi-scene production. We sit in darkness or in a sort of twilight zone while long, cumbersome scene shifts are made. Momentum and dramatic build are lost. A simpler, imaginative playing space would suffice. The staging and dances are muddy and lacking in focus.

Even though in this presentation we only hear and see "Bat Boy" through a glass darkly, there are hints and flickering moments of the merits and potential of this unique piece of theatre. Laurence O'Keefe's music is melodic and interesting. The book with its many layered themes has intriguing moments of farce and tragedy.

Finally, I reiterate and state the obvious. When you do a musical, you have to have singers who can hit the notes and sing the character. This requirement trumps every bloody thing else.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.