

"Fiddler" at Villa is Fun Family
by Rosemarie Howard
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Tradition! Tradition and families—that is what the classic story of "Fiddler on the Roof" is all about, and it never seems to grow old. The production presently being staged at the Villa Playhouse Theatre in Springville is fun community theatre. Along with providing some easy to watch family entertainment, it is also providing several families the opportunity to perform together—starting, perhaps, a tradition of their own.

Kim Thornock, his wife, Kareen, and their children: James, Carl, Carolyn, and Angela appear as Hershel, Eva, Solomon, Itzak—respectively—with the baby, Angela, appearing as Motel and Tzeitel's child.

"It's been a great experience for our family," commented Kareen Thornock. "I've always wanted to be in a play, and finally took this opportunity. In some ways it's been like being part of an extended family reunion."

Breanne DeFreese, who was seen as Helen in "The Miracle Worker" at the Villa last year, appears as a village child, Masha. Her mother, LaNiece, plays the role of Shandel, Motel's mother.

Alauna Tucker is double cast as a larger than life Fruma-Sarah and Tatiana; her husband Daryl plays the constable. Their daughter, Madelyn, does a convincing job of playing Grandma Tzeitel (alternating nights with Shannon Minch), returned from the grave. The voice she uses is perfect for the part.

Joyce Booth plays the part of Golde; her husband, Kevin is the rabbi; and three of their children are cast as: Benjamin (Alex); Aaron (Nathaniel); Anya (Megan); and Bielke (Arianne), one of Teyve's youngest daughters.

Amy and Jay Hafen, married in real life, play the parts of Hodel and Perchik.

Autumn Woods, performs the role of young Chava and her older brother, Bronzson is Joseph; her sister, ChaiDee is Luda.

Margret Milius plays Rachel and her two sisters support the cast as part of the technical crew—Laura Milius on sound, and Jasmine Milius on lights.

Brother and sister, Jennifer and Daniel Jenson play Chava (one of Teyve's daughters) and Vladimir, a Russian.

The production is well-directed by Kathleen Nutt. Limited stage space has been used effectively to accomodate a cast of over 50 people, with some of the entrances and exits spilling into the house. Both the blocking and choreography use the space well and work with the abilities of the performers.

The musical accompaniment was recorded and rather thin, but a good choice in the circumstances. The ensemble singing is nicely done and has a well-blended full sound. Especially pleasing, both visually and aurally, was the "Sabbath Prayer" scene. The sight of many families simultaneously lighting their candles in celebration of the Sabbath was effective and well carried out.

The portrayal of Teyve offered by David Haenlein is very adequate and well-rehearsed.

Nate Christensen added a nice touch as the Fiddler—along with producing a fine sound on his fiddle, he occasionally danced while playing his tune—no easy feat.

Overall, this production of the stage play written by Joseph Stein, Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock, is a fine piece of community theatre and worth seeing.