

LittleNeckPatch

ARTS

'Bikinis' Is A Blast

Queens Theater in the Park presents a new musical based on classic pop hits from the 60s and 70s

By **Patrick Conti** 12:30pm

It's definitely not swimsuit weather outside, but **Ray Roderick's** (<http://www.Miracleor2.com/>) new musical **'The Bikinis'** (<http://thebikinismusical.com/>) is a theatrical beach party that carries with it all the warmth of summer.

The show, which promises to get everyone dancing in the aisles, relives the complicated lives of four friends — all of them part of a pop group called 'The Bikinis' that released a 'one-hit-wonder' back in the 1960s.

Beginning with the summer of 1964, on the night these four friends got their name after winning the Belmar Beach Talent Contest, 'The Bikinis' walks through the lives of these women, right up to New Years Eve 1999.

Reunited after 30 years to perform once more at a benefit show to save Florida beach resort from impending demolition, The Bikinis walk down memory lane as they sing classic hits from the 1960s.

"It's a light hearted comedy, a musical, that tells the story of four women who are right around 50 but still sort of coming of age," Roderick said.

And their stories struck a personal chord with many in the audience at a performance Friday night.

"It really made me nostalgic," said Ozone Park resident Elaine Lucas. "I used to go down to the shore every summer and they did a great job of capturing the sights and sounds of that time and place."

But 'The Bikinis' isn't just a show for an older crowd. It has a universal appeal, which was enjoyed by groups of all ages on Friday night.

"That was wonderful," said student Veronica Nelson on her way out of the **Queens Theatre** (<http://queenstheatre.org/>) in Flushing Meadow Park.

Several friends and classmates at Friday's performance joined Nelson, who is currently studying at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy at Lincoln Center in its integrated music program.

"It really was incredible," said Josh Drake, also a student at the Manhattan arts academy. "Definitely a worthwhile experience."

Attendees also noted the light-hearted nature of The Bikinis that harkened back to a simpler time.

"It's definitely not the modern day Jersey Shore that you see on MTV," said Karyn Quackenbush, who plays Karla in the production.

That sentiment seemed to be certainly true on Friday night.

The Bikinis was also an interactive experience, with the girls from the band running out into the audience and pulling people up on stage to create a beach party atmosphere on stage.

"I can't remember the last time I had this much fun at the theater," said Ozone Park's Lucas. "I'm looking forward to my next Queens Theatre experience."

Remaining shows are scheduled for Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$34 to \$40 and are available at www.queenstheatre.org or by phone at 718-760-0064.

For a list of calendar events at the Queens Theatre, visit www.queenstheatre.org (<http://www.queenstheatre.org/>).



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