

R PARTS & LEISURE

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A love story set to music



Photo by Jana Marcus

Andrew Ceglio (left) and Ariel Buck, who are a couple on- and offstage, perform a scene from "The Last Five Years."

'The Last Five Years,' directed by Watsonville native, opens Friday

By C.J. CANNINO

FOR THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Cabrillo Stage is charging through the summer season with the theater's upcoming performance of "The Last Five Years," which opens this Friday and runs through Aug. 14 at Cabrillo's Black Box Theater.

"This is a show not to be missed," musical director Michael McGushin said.

"The Last Five Years" is a love story told almost entirely through the music of the characters Jamie Wellerstein, played by Andrew Ceglio, and Catherine Hiatt, played by Ariel Buck. For McGushin, it's especially important to him because offstage Jamie and Catherine are a couple that he previously directed in Cabrillo's "Little Shop of Horrors."

"It's thrilling for me to work with them. They're really brave as performers, they're not afraid to try new things," McGushin said.

McGushin hails from Watsonville,

where he graduated from Watsonville High School and said he spent many happy times on stage with major roles in high school musicals.

"It was an amazing theater program at Watsonville High," McGushin said.

The Watsonville resident credits his former teacher, Herman Fischer, for inspiring him to become a professional in musical theater. For this role in "The Last Five Years," McGushin will be directing the show while also playing the piano. Naturally, he's enthused about the show's musical score.

"It's an eclectic mix of jazz, classical and musical theater and it all belongs together," he said.

"The music in 'The Last Five Years' is so evocative," Cabrillo Stage publicist Ann Parker said. "Every time I've heard the song 'The Next 10 Minutes' I've cried."

Parker said ticket sales for "The Full Monty" have been brisk and the summer season at Cabrillo Stage is a smorgasbord for all theater tastes.

"The Full Monty" is widely funny, 'Hair-spray,' opening July 22, is a show meant

for all ages and "The Last Five Years" is probably the most adult play because it's thoughtful and artistic," Parker said.

For director and choreographer Mollie Maxner, "The Last Five Years" is like Christmas in July.

"The first day of rehearsal was like Christmas because the show is one great package already put together," she said. "The actors have great chemistry, they're excellent singers and they naturally act by expressing the music in such a clear way."

But Maxner said not to expect a conventional love story from beginning to end, because the play begins when the couple breaks up. She said her favorite scene is Jamie and Catherine's wedding.

"It's a central moment in the show when the two actors sing together for the first time," she said. "It's just beautiful and haunting. This is a show for anybody who has ever loved anyone in their life."

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Tickets range from \$16 to \$38. For information or to purchase tickets, call (831) 479-6154 or visit www.cabrillo-stage.com.



McGushin