

GUIDE

INSIDE D
THIS SECTION

Movie GuideD4
EntertainmentD6
Daybreak.....D7
Club Scene.....D8

COOL PICKS

THINGS TO DO IN THE UPCOMING WEEK

SATURDAY

'DOWNWARD DRAW'

The Museum of Art and History in Santa Cruz is bringing together two worlds on Saturday with an event that combines yoga with figure drawing. A free yoga class from instructors of various local yogis, plus a free life-drawing instruction from UC Santa Cruz take place at Abbott Square, just outside the museum. Bring your own mat and drawing supplies, 11 a.m., noon, 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. Details: www.santacruzmah.org.

TONIGHT

JIMMIE VAUGHAN

You're not going to find anybody with a greater blues resume than Jimmie Vaughan, who has blues greatness covered in both nature — he's the brother of the iconic Stevie Ray Vaughan — and nurture — he was the founder of the Fabulous Thunderbirds. Vaughan comes to Moe's Alley tonight in a show featuring his longtime friend the great Lou Ann Barton. Don't miss it. Details: www.moesalley.com.



NEXT WEEK

JAKE SHIMABUKURO

What Bela Fleck did for the banjo, Hawaiian-born Jake Shimabukuro is doing for the once-lowly, now-mighty ukulele. Jazz, bluegrass, folk, even classical — it all comes naturally to the brilliant uke master who has been compared to such giants as Jimi Hendrix and Miles Davis. See what the uke is capable of, next Tuesday, July 12 at the Rio Theatre. Details: www.riotheatre.com.

THURSDAY JULY 7, 2011

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THEATER

'Last Five Years' goes from love's peaks to its valleys

By WALLACE BAINE
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Love is heaven; love is hell. But mostly it's the journey between.

Just about anyone who has reached maturity knows a bit about the whipsaw emotional nature of love and relationships. But the human animal never tires of being reminded of love's peaks and valleys.

The unusually designed play "The Last Five Years" — presented by Cabrillo Stage and opening Friday — is about love, and it makes that journey from the heights to the depths in a way that never leaves audiences too high or too low.

Jason Robert Brown's acclaimed play is a "song cycle" — in fact, director Mollye Maxner estimates that 98 percent of the show's dialogue is sung. It is the story of one five-year relationship between a man and a woman from its promising beginnings to its

SEE 'YEARS' ON D2



R.R. JONES/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Andrew Ceglio (left) and Ariel Buck play troubled lovers in the new production of 'The Last Five Years' at Cabrillo Stage.

'YEARS'

Continued from D1

heartbreaking end.

The twist is that the play is told "Benjamin Button"-style, with each character moving in opposite directions in time as they tell their story.

Andrew Ceglio and Ariel Buck play Jamie and Catherine, respectively. They alternate songs, as they go through the five years of being together. But while Jamie, a on-the-way-up novelist, moves forward in time, beginning with the dizzy highs of falling in love, Catherine, a struggling actress, is moving through the relationship backward, dealing with the fallout of a devastating break-up at the beginning and going back to the happy start of the relationship.

"This show provides an opportunity that is rare in our storytelling culture," said director Maxner, in her first season at Cabrillo Stage.

IF YOU GO

'THE LAST FIVE YEARS'

WRITTEN AND COMPOSED

BY: Jason Robert Brown

PRESENTED BY: Cabrillo Stage

WHEN: Opening Friday, through Aug. 14

WHERE: The Black Box Theater, on the campus of Cabrillo College

COST: \$16 to \$34 general

DETAILS: For more information on dates and ticket prices, call 479-6154 or www.cabrillostage.com.

"Most of the time, stories are just about plot. This is about interactions between these people and what it's doing to them. This is about stepping inside these characters and entering the world of the unknown and mysterious emotions."

What makes the current

production that much more interesting is that Ceglio and Buck, the show's two stars, have been in an off-stage monogamous relationship for four years. The actors first met during Cabrillo Stage's 2007 production of "Little Shop of Horrors." During the last two years, Ceglio directed and Buck performed in the consecutive productions of "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change."

"Ariel and I pride ourselves in our ability to separate our personal lives from our work," Ceglio said. "There were a couple of moments of concern for us that we had going into it. We just wanted to be very careful that we didn't bring any of this stuff home with us. It's been wonderful."

"I think it's really brought us closer together," said Buck. "It's made it easier for us to get over hurdles that we might have trouble otherwise getting over."

"The Last Five Years" was first produced in Chicago in

2001, and moved the next year to off-Broadway. Since then, it has been produced all over the world.

Brown wrote the songs in response to the failure of his marriage. They include "Shiksa Goddess," "I Didn't Believe in You," and "Still Hurting." Maxner worked with musical director Michael McGushin and a six-piece ensemble to produce the music.

"He put all of himself into the show," said Buck of playwright Brown. "You could listen to the score, without lyrics, and know exactly what's going on in the show."

"The way he orchestrates the music, it's all from character," Maxner said. "What he paints emotionally through how the instrumentation is scored, you realize in a moment that they are experiencing something real. There are moments directing where I would have a question about the scene, then (I would listen to the music) and then, oh, yes that's what this is about."