

GUIDE

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COOL PICKS

THINGS TO DO
IN THE
UPCOMING
WEEK

SATURDAY

CALIF. HONEYDROPS

Just a few years ago, these R&B power players were jamming in BART stations in Oakland. Now the California Honeydrops are one of the Bay Area's finest musical exports, having won awards for their party-band approach to soul, blues and New Orleans-style boogie. See them live Saturday at Moe's Alley in Santa Cruz. Details: www.moesalley.com.

THIS WEEKEND

SC WOODWORKERS

Many of Santa Cruz's finest woodworkers and furniture-makers will be displaying their best work at a new exhibit called 'Studio Made,' featuring the work of Roger Heitzman, Om Anand, Matthew Werner and many others. It opens Saturday at the Museum of Art & History in Santa Cruz and will be up through mid November. Details: www.santacruzmah.org.



MONDAY

SASHA DOBSON

If the surname of vocalist Sasha Dobson is familiar, you're officially a longtime Santa Cruzan. Sasha is the daughter of one-time Santa Cruz jazz power couple Smith and Gail Dobson. Now a New Yorker, she comes back to her hometown to showcase her latest album 'Burn,' and drink in her California roots. She plays Monday at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center. Details: www.kuumbwajazz.org.

THURSDAY JULY 28, 2011

WWW.SANTACRUZSENTINEL.COM

THEATER

Actors make 'Hairspray' magical

By KATIE HUGHES MCKEE
features@santacruzsentinel.com

Last Friday night's opening of "Hairspray" at Cabrillo Stage began with howls of delight when the man who created the company, Lile Cruse, took his place in the pit, and finished with a standing ovation. The exchange of energy between audience and actor, the magic that is created in live performance, was palpable.

"Hairspray" is set in 1962 Baltimore against the backdrop of the civil rights struggle, where "pleasingly plump" Tracy Turnblad sets her sights on being a star of the local teen TV program "The Corny Collins Show," (think Dick Clark meets Bobby Darin) where she declares that "every day should be Negro Day!"

Tracy's mom Edna is a very large person who hasn't left the house in years. Dad Wilbur runs his joke shop downstairs. Pal Penny is Tracy's greatest fan, stalked by a strict Catholic mother. Tracy's fantasy dreamboat is Link, the Justin Timberlake of Corny's show, and her nemesis is Amber, the Britney Spears, who has been taking lessons from her mother Velma, the show's producer, on how to sleep your way to the top.

Even if you have seen the John Waters 1988 film and/or the 2007 movie musical, you have not seen this production. There are similarities, of course, but this vehicle has more meat on its bones, better musical numbers, and a completely different second act. Oh, yes, it's also witty and hilarious.

Newcomer Monica Turner, as Tracy, pounces on the role in the first moments and shakes it like a terrier till the curtain goes down. Tony

'HAIRSPRAY'

Continued from D1

Panighetti is gigantic and fragile as Edna, and Doug Baird is his perfect counterpart as Wilbur. All the roles are well cast and performed, but Jennifer Taylor Daniels brings down the house with her superb vocals on "I Know Where I've Been," and Corey Liggans as Seaweed is a singin', dancin', actin' triple threat. Two actors nearly steal the show: Joyce Michaelson, a familiar face in local theater but new to CS, plays Prudy Pingleton to a repressed T, but just wait till she shows up as the lesbian gym coach and the drill sergeant jail guard! And Ashley Rae Little, as Penny, milks her sidekick role into the best since Mame Dennis had Vera Charles.

Skip Epperson's delightful sets take us immediately into the cartoon '60s world of "The Jetsons" and "The Pink Panther," with a little "Laugh-In" thrown in. The same pastels seen on the autos of that era are evident in both sets and costuming. Costuming: Maria Crush has built a huge show, including fat suits. In "Welcome to the Sixties," the audience gasped and applauded the costumes as the characters made their entrances.

Janie Scott brought all this together: designers and direction, casting and choreography. The dancing is dazzling and her directorial skills are evident in her signature production numbers. Mini-stories are happening all over the stage, characters and plot are being developed even as we goggle at the song and dance. A person would have to see the show several times to catch all that goes on. Which I plan to do.



JANA MARCUS/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tracy (Monica Turner) with her mom Edna (Tony Panighetti) in 'Hairspray,' now playing at Cabrillo Stage.

SEE 'HAIRSPRAY' ON D2

IF YOU GO

'HAIRSPRAY — THE BROADWAY MUSICAL'

PRESENTED BY: Cabrillo Stage
DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY: Janie Scott

MUSICAL DIRECTION: Lile O. Cruse
WHEN: Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sundays 2 p.m., through Aug. 14. Special children's matinee, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 10 a.m.

WHERE: The Crocker Theatre on the campus of Cabrillo College, Aptos
COST: Adult: \$16 to \$38. Senior (60+): \$16 to \$36. Children (6 to 12): \$16 to \$32

DETAILS: 479.6154 or www.cabrillostage.com

NOTE: There will be another production in the same building, so allow plenty of time for parking.