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'Beautiful' brings Carole King's story to the Keith-Albee

By TAYLOR STUCK The Herald-Dispatch tstuck@hdmediallc.com
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Submitted photo

Kennedy Caughell, left, portrays Carole King in the touring production of "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical," which takes ti of the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Submitted photo

HUNTINGTON — Racing around the roller rink to songs like "The Loco-Motion" as a child, Kennedy Caughell didn't realize Carole King was behind so many of the songs that peppered the soundtrack of her life.



“I didn’t know much about Carole King,” said Caughell, who plays King in the traveling production of “Beautiful: The Carole King Musical.” “I was surprised because I didn’t know she wrote so many things. Fans will be surprised by how much she wrote, I think.”

Caughell and company will bring King’s story to life on the stage of the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center in Huntington on Wednesday, Oct. 9, kicking off the Baxter Series of the Marshall Artists Series.



“Beautiful” tells the true story of King’s rise to stardom, from being a part of a hit songwriting team with her husband, Gerry Goffin, to her relationship with fellow writers and best friends Cynthis Weil and Barry Mann, to becoming one of the most successful solo acts in popular music history.

The show features beloved songs such as “I Feel the Earth Move,” “One Fine Day,” “(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman,” “You’ve Got a Friend” and the title song, “Beautiful.”

“As soon as I booked the show, I listened to ‘Tapestry,’ and now I’m a huge fan,” Caughell said.

Caughell and the 19-person cast worked hard to prepare for the tour, putting the show together in just a week and a half. With the exception of Caughell and James Michael Lambert, who plays Barry Mann, the cast had not been in the show before and Caughell said they all were excited to bring it to life.

“The best part is the main five group. They are friends in the show, but the friendship is real,” she said. “It’s why it’s so warm and loving, because we really love each other. That doesn’t always happen. The entire ensemble worked so hard. You will not be disappointed. The talent in this cast is intense. I’m honored to be here.”



Caughell herself read King's biography — which she recommends to anyone — and listened to interviews with King to learn her mannerisms and speech patterns.

"No one can be Carole," Caughell said. "I had to find middle ground and meld Carole and Kennedy to be what you see onstage so that it comes from a truthful place."

Caughell said she also has to be mindful of giving tribute to a woman who is still giving to the world.

"If you listen to her interviews, she wasn't even gung-ho about her life being a musical," Caughell said. "She's on board now. I think she gives her OK for all of the Caroles. But she keeps a low-profile and she's humble. She keeps a degree of separation because she's very private."

Caughell said through the show, she's learned about King's resiliency and kindness.

"She went through a lot of adversity," she said. "I don't want to spoil it. She's an incredible being that had incredible influence on our music, and that continues today. She continues to walk in the spirit of forgiveness and love. A lot happened and she could have been angry. The fact she maintained kindness when it was hard is a thing I love about her."

Caughell said it's a really inspiring and empowering show for all generations, and she hopes the audience leaves with a love for fellow man and a refreshed excitement for Carole King.

Follow reporter Taylor Stuck on Twitter and Facebook @TaylorStuckHD.

If You Go

WHAT: Beautiful: The Carole King Musical

WHEN: 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9

WHERE: Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center

INFO: Tickets available from \$54 to \$85. Purchase online at www.ticketmaster.com or call the box office at 304-696-3326.

UP NEXT: "The Ultimate Queen Celebration, starring Marc Martel," 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 22.



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