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'Tom Sawyer' brings nostalgia with family fun to outdoor theater

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TOM SAWYER continues at Shawnee Mission Park's
Theater in the Park through Saturday, July 26.

*Bob Compton and courtesy of Shawnee Mission's Theatre in the
Park*

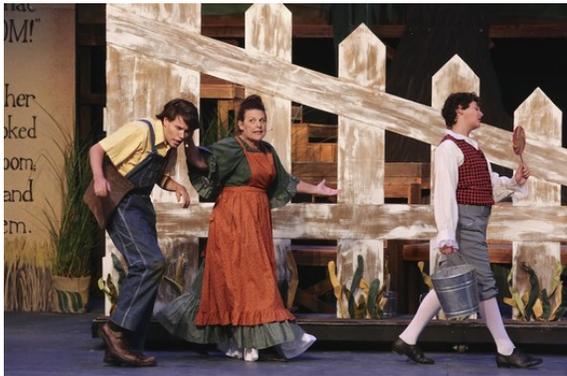
Tom Sawyer

Rating: ★★★★★

Shawnee Mission Park's Theater in the Park

2014 summer season continues with the hit
musical, "Tom Sawyer," based on the Mark Twain

classic, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.



Bob Compton and courtesy of Theater in the Park

Performances continue Wednesday through Saturday nights beginning July 23 at 8:30 p.m. the amphitheater under the stars. The show follows the Mark Twain story but eliminates any controversy over issues, such as slavery, and the political environment of the time. Instead, the show highlights Tom and his friend, Huckleberry Finn, as they witnessed the murder of the town doctor by the hands of the enemy, Injun Joe.

The boys are faced with the dilemma of whether to keep silent, tell the truth in a courtroom, knowing that their lives may be jeopardy. And no story of Tom Sawyer can be complete without the love interest, Becky Thatcher, the girl who stole his heart at first glance.

“Tom Sawyer,” brings a lot of action and color to the stage with beautiful costumes, crisp choreography, great casting, good orchestration, strong lighting, and very clear sound. Give lots of credit to the creative team produce the show and especially director Bess Wallerstein Huff.

Along with the creative team, the cast performed admirably. The two leads, Tom Sawyer Huckleberry Finn were portrayed by too young,

up-and-coming actors Preston Offill and Jeremy Walterman. Two other strong performance came from Simon Schupp and Roderick Duplissie who created three different characters.

Pam Sollars and Donna Dandino gave strong vocal and stage presence to their characters of Aunt Polly and Widow Douglas.

Director, Bess Wallerstein Huff; vocal director/conductor/accompanist, Marsha Canaday; choreographer, Kacy Christensen; fight choreographer, Chris Gleeson; stage manager, April Lynn Kobetz; assistant stage manager, Kristine Luthi; assistant stage manager, Hunter Hawkins; costume coordinator, Jenny Green; props coordinator, Tam Osgood; scenic designer, Annie Breitenstein.

Tom Sawyer, Preston Offill; Huck Finn, Jeremy Walterman; Becky Thatcher, Mosha Clyma; Aunt Polly, Pam Sollars; Widow Douglas, Donna Dandino; Judge Thatcher, Scott Powell; Reverend Sprague, Chip Buckner; Muff Potter, Steven Martin; Injun Joe, Simon Schupp, Doc Robinson/Lemuel Dobbins, Craig Boyd; Pap/Lanyard Bellamy, Roderick Duplissie; Gideon Temple, Rod Chapin; Sidney Sawyer, Max Pinson; Amy Lawrence, Meaghan Parker; Lucy Harper, Vicotria Loepp; Sabina Temple, Erica Punch; Susie Rogers, Haley Wolf; Ben Rogers, Steven Scheffe; George Bellamy, Grant Lescher; Lyle Bellamy, Jacob Springer; Joe Harper, Chase Simmions; Jim Hollis, Gerald Briscoe; Alfred Temple, Colin Rohach; Sherriff, John Feldmann. Girls: Darcy Hingula, Amanda Dulny, Mattie Bell, Alexa Morgan, Mia Vaught, Genevieve Austin, Jentry Muck. Mary Ann Traxler, Amber Nugent;

Boys: Evan Nugent, Daniel Owens, Treyson Gates Smith, Adam Segura; Ensemble: Don Schierding, Kelly Cady (Jessica Rogers), Corinne Bakker, Serena Fox, Jeanne Marx, Dena Hildebrand.

The show comes with high recommendations to entertain everyone. The show features lively song and dance numbers in a simple story of a time long past. More information can be found at the [Theater in the Park](#) website. Tickets, parking passes, reserved seating, and boxed picnics may be purchased there.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- **'Hello, Dolly!' encourages free family fun in Leawood**
- **'Drunks' pushes all bounds with nudity, sex, drugs, homosexuality, to name a few**
- **Farcical comedy mixes race, sex, drugs, culinary nose, drag, marriage and more**
- **Brother John sings Sam Cooke tribute along with biographical storytelling**
- **'The Dinner and Show Show' sans dinner adds laughs**



Bob Evans

Kansas City Performing Arts Examiner

