This is Garrett Stack on The Theatre Circuit.

The charming French farce that took the world by surprise in the 1978 film, La Cage aux Folles, was adapted as a stage musical five years later. La Cage aux Folles the musical was a smash on Broadway in 1983 and the production received nine Tony Award nominations and won six, including Best Musical, Best Score by Jerry Herman and Best Book by Harvey Fierstein. Groundbreaking, it was the first Broadway musical to feature a gay couple as the central focus.

Ever since, the musical has been wildly successful and is performed all over the world with major productions translated and mounted in such diverse locales as South Korea, Denmark, Spain, Germany, Panama, Mexico, The Netherlands and Sweden. In the United States and English speaking countries around the world, La Cage is a staple in the musical canon.

A quick plot summary: Two gay men living in St. Tropez have their lives turned upside down when the son of one of the man announces he is getting married. They try to conceal their lifestyle and their ownership of the drag club downstairs when the fiancée and her ultra-conservative parents come for dinner to meet the boy’s parents. Let the fun begin.

Bringing it home, a dazzling production directed by Rob Ruggiero, with a very strong all-Equity cast, is now in summer residence at Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Connecticut. Some may be thinking, “Not another La Cage aux Folles.” But stop. Once again this amazing theater has mounted a production that is fresh, naughty, witty, and very musical – all thanks to a team of pros on and off stage that transport the audience to a little Saint Tropez night club and attached residence for an evening of uncontrollable laughter and shouts of bravo throughout the show.

Where to begin. Let’s start with Jamison Stern, in the role of Albin, “Za-Za” the drag star of the nightclub. His hilarious over the top antics contrasted by his nuanced vulnerabilities are just the start of what audiences hailed at the curtain call. His comic timing is right there. His singing is strong and in no small measure brought the house down with what has become an anthem of the marginalized, I Am What I Am. Sassy and cute, weak yet strong, this Albin is among the best I’ve ever seen – and I’ve seen plenty.

Opposite Stern is James Lloyd Reynolds as Georges. Ah the chemistry between the two men is palpable. Georges as husband and protector and deeply in love with Albin is so torn by the choice he has to make to satisfy his son – at Albin’s expense. His two big solos, Song On The Sand and Look Over There were especially poignant.

And in the role of, how shall I put it, the self-absorbed son, Jean Michele, Conor Ryan was certainly convincing. Though we hate the hurt he’s inflicting, he makes us see the dilemma he’s in. Of course, happily, redemption comes in the end.

The dream, featured role in this musical is Jacob, the maid. It requires exaggerated effeminate, comic turns. Originally the part called for an African-American. Since the 2010 Broadway revival, the role is often played by a Puerto Rican, as in this production. Cedric Leiba, Jr.’s intentionally thick accent and mannerisms add to his sidesplitting performance that will keep you smiling for days.

And what production of La Cage aux Folles would be complete without the Cagelles, the feminine illusions who support the action with powerful ensemble singing and well-executed choreography by Ralph Perkins. The seven men and one woman especially excite when they are in Michael McDonald’s dazzling bird costumes inside a birdcage that morphs into prison bars – a metaphor for the times. Surprising and thrilling.

Had we more time I could exalt over everything: the other supporting roles, all performed with aplomb; the lighting, scenic design, and superb sound design, without which you have no show; the director’s use of breaking the fourth wall. I could remind you of the adored anthem that came out of this show, The Best of Times is Now, that had the audience singing along at the top of their voices. But we’ve come to the end.

So, if you couldn’t guess, I highly recommend La Cage aux Folles at Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Connecticut. It’s been extended beyond Labor Day through September 10.

On the Theatre Circuit for WMNR, I’m Garrett Stack. [Saw the 7/15/15, 7:30 PM performance.]