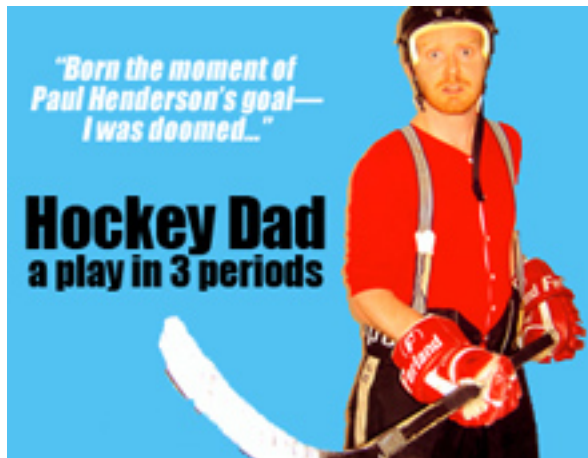


REVIEW: Hockey Dad: A Play in 3 Periods

By Tom Eremondi, Special to The StarPhoenix July 31, 2010 9:18 AM



Burnt Thicket Theatre

Broadway Theatre

Rating 4 1/2

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September 28, 1972: Hockey fans will no doubt recognize that date.

In Burnt Thicket's production of *Hockey Dad: A Play in 3 Periods*, it's the date Todd Williams (played by James Popoff) was born. That beginning characterizes his relationship with his hockey hero dad and his wanna-be hockey player daughter, Sarah.

Todd's dilemma is that, having sworn never to wear skates ever again, he's obligated to when Sarah signs him up for a father-daughter hockey game. *Hockey Dad* takes place in the dressing room where Todd deliberates, stalls, and struggles with his past and present.

There's a stinky bag full of material for hockey fans -- stadium rock, Howie Meeker's telestrater, hero worship and actual skating!

There's also a touching, poignant script by Popoff and Stephen Waldschmidt. The two fill their play with a great knowledge of the sport, as well as humour and pathos.

Popoff delivered an all-star performance in this one-man play. He subtly switched into character voices of his daughter and dad. More remarkably he delivered lines crisply and convincingly while dressing in equipment right down to skates. Popoff went all out for a full 60 minutes.

There were some excellent comic scenes. One was, while pretending to be Don Quixote, the demolition of a dragon made of hockey gear. Other highlight reel moments involved audience interaction - a million dollar shootout while blindfolded and a reluctant reviewer pulled on stage as Quixote's sidekick.

A more defined ending would have made Hockey Dad a perfect production.

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