THEATER REVIEW

S.C. Children's Theatre offers a delightful 'Rapunzel' musical

S.C. Children's Theatre's "Rapunzel! Rapunzel!" is a colorful and genially zany musical that will delight the kids and charm the parents as well.

This playful production, which opened last week, continues at the Peace Center's Gunter Theatre this weekend with four more performances.

One of the principal pleasures of this show — full title "Rapunzel! Rapunzel! A Very Hairy Fairy Tale" — is the high-spirited cast, led by Carly Frates as the imprisoned title character.

Frates, who hardly ever leaves the confines of her castle balcony, is a sparkling Rapunzel, radiant in voice and appearance.

With an appealing pop-rock score by Janet Yates Vogt and Mark Friedman, the musical centers on the long-haired Rapunzel, who has been trapped in a tower by the evil Lady Za Za (DeAna Earl), who wants to rule the kingdom.

It's up to Sir Roderick (Tony Glass) and his hairdresser friend Edgar (Jesse Siak) to rescue Rapunzel, the rightful heir to the throne.

Director Betsy Bisson embraces the lighthearted hilarity of this adaptation of the Rapunzel fairy tale, keeping the proceedings broad and frolicsome.

Children will enjoy the musical's gentle merriment. The inside jokes directed at theater and fairy tales, meanwhile, will likely beguile the adults.

In addition to Frates, Earl is a standout in this production. She plays Lady Za Za with appropriate flamboyant conceit, unleashing a powerful voice on "It's All About Me."

Glass is a winning and self-possessed Sir Roderick. Siak brings nimble comic skills to the role of Edgar.

Steve Griner is endearing as the harmless dragon Socrates. Griner also is responsible for the tight musical direction. (Kim Granner designed Griner's fanciful costume.)

Treyci Waters does a fine turn as a New Jersey-accented Gypsy. The rest of the ensemble is solid, particularly in a dandy tango chorus.

The superb set, costume and wig designs by Ryan Bradburn (sets) and Ashli Arnold (costumes, wigs) evoke a perfect storybook atmosphere.

For tickets to "Rapunzel! Rapunzel!" call 864-467-3000.

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