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"This Beautiful City" redux

December 3rd, 2009, 2:17 pm · Post a Comment · posted by Mark Barna

Want to re-live Ted Haggard's fall from grace at New Life Church? Or hear bouncy songs on how Colorado Springs became the evangelical capital of America? Are you curious how conservative Christians' condemnation of same-sex attraction affects the lives of gays and transgendered people? Then you might want to read my story on the musical "This Beautiful running Friday, Dec. 11, at gazette.com in the entertainment section. The musical examines the evangelical movement in Colorado Springs by using the exact words of evangelical and liberal residents interviewed in 2007.



"This Beautiful City"
City"

The musical premiered in Colorado Springs about two years ago, and is now returning after having runs in New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

It's running here Dec. 4-6: Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at Cornerstone Arts Center, 825 N. Cascade. The show is free but tickets are required. Get tickets at Worner Campus Center Information, 902 N. Cascade Ave., 389-6607. The shows are free.

Below are edited excerpts of my interview with Kat Tudor — a yoga instructor with liberal spiritual views who was interviewed by the troupe back in 2007 as fodder for the musical. I also interview below Ronnie Cook, leader of the evangelical Christian Flying W Ranch band, which makes an appearance in the musical.

MARK BARNA: "You were a character in the workshop version of 'This Beautiful City.'"

KAT TUDOR: "They came into town and I was one who they interviewed. They used my actual words (in the workshop version that ran in 2007 at Colorado College). I represented the liberal perspective here in Colorado Springs."

BARNA: "What did you think of the workshop version and the way you were portrayed?"

TUDOR: "It was moving, funny, I liked the music. I thought they did a fair presentation of the evangelical community as presented in their own words. There was no attempt to make fun or make a point."

"It's a real evenhanded look at the evangelical community. They interviewed people and put it up on stage. We are an evangelical center. We need to recognize this."

Ronnie Cook, leader of the Flying W Ranch Christian band, was not interviewed by the troupe for the film. Nevertheless, the troupe portrayed the band as a 3-member Christian cowboy group singing Christian ditties in 3-part harmony. The Flying W Ranch band has five members, including a fiddle player.

BARNA: "You say you weren't interviewed by the troupe, even though your group is in the musical?"

RONNIE COOK: "I do not recall being interviewed. But I want to do some research on that."

FROM A LATER INTERVIEW AFTER COOK RESEARCHED THE PRODUCTION ...

BARNA: "What do you know about 'This Beautiful City'?"

COOK: "It appears to me that lots of folks like the play and lots of folks don't. I really don't have an opinion on it. They also portray us as three rather than five in group."

"I'm thinking of going down and watching it to see what it's about."

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