

# Tibbits' 'Peter Pan' production is a pure delight

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FOR THE ENQUIRER

## If you go

Peter Pan runs July 9, 10, 16 and 17 at 8 p.m., and July 11, 15 and 18 at 2 p.m. at the Tibbits Opera House, 14 S. Hanchett St. in Coldwater. Tickets range from \$12 to \$33. For more information, contact the box office at 517-278-6025 or [www.tibbits.org](http://www.tibbits.org).

Peter Pan is the spirit of childhood, which explains his staying power. Whether experienced as a play, book, cartoon or musical, Pan's Neverland adventures never fail to captivate audiences. The Tibbits Summer Theatre's musical production of 'Peter Pan' is no exception. It is a pure delight.

Based on Sir James M. Barrie's 1904 stage play, the 1954 musical has lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, and music by Morris Charlap with additional music by Jule Styne.

The story opens in the Darling Family's nursery, where the three Darling children encounter Peter Pan looking for his shadow. Led by older sister Wendy, the children beg Peter Pan to take them to Neverland. Peter Pan agrees, declaring that Wendy will be a mother to his fellow Lost Boys. Together they fly to Neverland, with a little help from pixie dust.

The Darling children join the Lost Boys, make friends with the natives, and battle the notorious Captain Hook and his pirate band. Eventually, the Darlings miss their mother. They decide to return home, taking with them the Lost Boys who also want a mother. Peter Pan, however, remains behind, insistent that he will never grow up.

Director Kevin Halpin's cast and crew deliver a fabulous show, full of imagination, laughter and music. Their collaborative creativity is everywhere, from the dancing to the singing to the swinging from the rafters. It is evident



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"Peter Pan" is now playing at Tibbits Opera House in Coldwater.

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## Review

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in the costumes, the set and the magical effects. This show is just plain fun.

It starts with Lizzy Palmer, who gives a brilliant performance as the impish Pan. Combining comedic skill with little-boy bravado and a dash of wistfulness, she is the unquestioned leader of the Lost Boys and a clear thorn in any stodgy adult's side. She has a beautiful voice. And her flying? Inspired.

Ashley Elizabeth Smith's Wendy is lovely and sweet. Her English accent is spot-on, which makes her girlish attempts at motherhood all the more endearing. It is easy to see why the Lost Boys follow her home and why Peter thinks twice about staying behind.

Charles Burr is a worthy adversary as the dastardly

Captain Hook. Snarling, preening, whining, cowering, he more than fulfills the iconic villain's boots. His unwitting duet with Peter Pan in "Mysterious Lady" is a hilarious highpoint.

Jessica Bracy delivers a fierce and beautiful Tiger Lily, Joey Gugliemelli brings a single-minded silliness to Mr. Smee, and Drew Porrett is comedic gold as Nana, the Darling's canine nursemaid.

It is the ensemble, however, that makes the show – the Lost Boys, the Natives and the Pirates. This is a strong group of singers, dancers, comedians and actors. They fill the stage with movement and merriment, making the leads shine all the brighter.

Musical director Cheryl VanDuzen's orchestra provides a full sound that compliments the cast's strong voices and Dougie Robbins' smooth choreography. The ensemble numbers are some of the best in the show, especially toe-tappers like "I Won't Grow Up" and "Ugh-A-Wug". The dance between Wendy and Peter Pan's shadow is delightful, as is Captain Hook's musical

"brainstorming" sessions, and the balletic "Liza's Dance".

Jamie DeHay's sets are full of detail, especially Neverland, where color, depth and childlike ingenuity meet. Marc W. Vital II's costumes are equally creative, worthy of any child's imagination. His Neverland inhabitants look like storybook characters come to life. Light designer Aaron Lichamer deserves acting kudos for his glowing, darting Tinkerbell. Who knew green light could have such depth?

Flying by Foy provided the technical pixie dust that enabled Peter Pan and the children to fly. It is the same technique used to fly Mary Martin in her iconic portrayal of Pan in the original musical. It is worth mentioning, for the flying is seamless, enabling the actors to stay in character despite breaking with gravity.

'Peter Pan' is a timeless story, and this production is worth anyone's time.

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