

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2008

Starved Rock and Holidazzle

... Russ and I both bought a bottle of our favorite wine from the taste, then went a few doors down to Holidazzle for a night of what we thought would be a one-part charming, one-part awful/hilarious small-town holiday show.

First of all, Russ and I were the youngest people there by about fifty years, which at first I thought was funny, then sad. The show was hosted by the theater's general manager, a cheesy 50-something washed-up, Vegas-looking lounge type named Don Grant Zellmer, with gaunty cheeks, frosted hair, and one of those creepy thin goatees. (Don, if you read this, which I'm sure you will, because you probably Google your name every day, don't take it too personally.) He was billed on the program as "Branson headliner Don Grant Zellmer." Branson! And he had more wardrobe changes than Carrie Underwood—blue jacket, striped jacket, red jacket, black jacket with tails.

The show started out bad-funny. This Don guy acted and sang in the numbers, too—most of them solos—and he was awful, although clearly thought he was the shit. The rest of the cast were, I'd say, around 20—three women and two men. They were well on their way to being equally as cheesy, and sweaty. Luckily Russ and I were seated at a table at the back of the room, because I kept laughing. Then it took a turn from bad-funny to just bad. Some of their numbers were appalling, and we kept looking at each other like, "WHAT is going ON?" Like the number where the tall sweaty one dressed in a sombrero and sang "Jingly bells" in a horrible accent. And when the scary-eyed girl sang "I want a boob job for Christmas." Utica—Don Grant Zellmer—do you live in a air-raid shelter?

Then some of it was just *weird*. There was a "holiday in the tropics" act that included not-at-all-holiday-related songs "Get On Your Feet" by Gloria Estefan and "Living La Vida Loca" by Ricky Martin. WHAT? DON! SERIOUSLY, come out of that shelter.

I felt bad for the girls, too, because they had to wear these awful Rockettes-like costumes with giant headpieces and bottoms that were like granny panties that went up past their belly buttons. And I'm SURE some of the old guys in the audience were ogling them, BUT THEN the girls were playing to the old guys, like sitting on their laps and stuff, and oh my god, show, why?

And, people, I swear to god I thought this show would never end. It was the longest show of my life. I don't know how the director, if there even was one, thought it was a good idea to have a three-hour-long holiday show that ends at 11pm when the entire audience is old people.

You know what it was like? It was like Don Grant Zellmer was performing this show in his basement, and everyone in the audience was just a figment of his imagination. Sort of like when Kramer finds the set of the old Merv Griffin Show in the dumpster and sets it up in his apartment. Like Don forced his daughter and her friends, or the neighborhood teens, to perform with pained cheesy grins in this show he wrote. Because he's insane.