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Review: 'Dogfight' at The Media Theatre in Media, PA

by [Kristen Seikaly](#) on [March 12, 2016](#)



"Semper Fi; Do or Die."

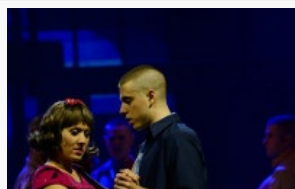
The Media Theatre has taken on the marine's motto this month with *Dogfight: The Musical*, with Music and Lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, and Book by Peter Duchan.



The Marines: Zack Krajnyak, Kyle Segarra, Joe Pudetti, Denzel Thomas, and CJ Celeiro. Photo by Maura McConnell.

Dogfight is based on the [film and screenplay](#) by Bob Comfort. Three marines set out to make the most of their last night Stateside before heading off to Vietnam in 1963. In a cruel bet, each marine competes to see who can bring the least attractive woman to their party that evening. One marine in particular finds a woman who offers so much more for the evening than either of them anticipated.

Zack Krajnyak as Eddie Birdlace offers an endearing performance. Eddie is a character who attempts to be relatively macho, yet Zack highlights the boyishness that comes from young men who constantly display faux confidence. Similarly, his voice rings clean and clear, and excels in the duets. He also managed to find more grit in his sound for his final number, "Come Back," which was a raw and welcome change.



Victoria Mayo as Rose Fenny is the clear standout performance in this production. Mayo grasps the uncertainty of a first romance as paired with the certainty of a strong moral compass. Her vocal technique also allowed her to create a definite voice for Rose that rang beautiful and true throughout the evening. The initial duet between Rose and Birdlace, "Come To A Party" was a standout for both Mayo and Krajnyak. Another heartbreakingly wonderful performance from Mayo came at the end of Act I in, "Pretty Funny."



At the Dance: Victoria Mayo and Zack Krajnyak. Photo by Maura McConnell.

The two other 'B's' of the 'three B's', Bernstein and Boland, played by Kyle Segarra and Joe Pudetti respectively, supported the story well. Both actors demonstrated the pressures that have shaped Eddie by infusing the story with sexism and rowdiness. Pudetti especially gives a performance that makes the audience hate Boland a little bit, which only demonstrates that Pudetti has done his job well.

Deborah Lynn Meier, as the jaded and mouthy prostitute Marcy, gave an outstanding acting performance that was brash but not over-the-top. However, in Marcy and Rose's duet, "It's A Dogfight," while the more speech-like sections of the song were fine, it was difficult for her to reach the high notes effectively. Therefore, the duet would have been better served if Mayo had sung the top line at the end of the song instead.

A special note should go to the ensemble of this production, namely for their vocal unity. This show contains numerous tight chords that require precision to ring out successfully, and such precision was achieved throughout the ensemble time and time again.

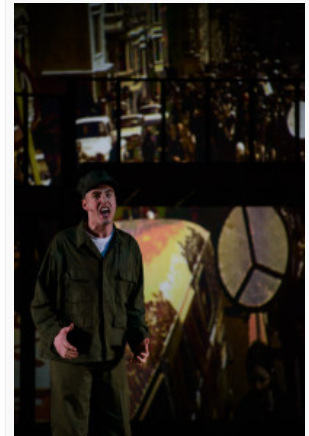
A sign of good stage direction is when the quality of the direction doesn't even occur to you at all. Instead, good direction allows the audience to experience the story as it exists rather than draw attention to itself. Director Jesse Cline achieves this in *Dogfight*. The same could be said for the musicians, led by Pianist and Conductor Chris Ertelt.

More musical than play however, the energy of this show is constant with vigorous ensemble action, done by Choreographer and Assistant Director Dann Dunn. "Hey Good Lookin'" in particular features lots of movement, but not a lot of dance per se.

The costumes, designed by Katie Yamaguchi, were enjoyable, and particular praise should be given to fun and beautiful party outfit given to Rose in Act I. The lighting, done by Greg Solomon, was most powerful when paired with the sound effects by Carl Park, during the Act II "War Sequence". However, the lighting at times was a bit problematic, especially the blue lights in the scenes on the raised platform that faced towards the audience. The scenic design, in turn by Matthew Miller, was simple and effective with interesting historical background projections.

For those theatregoers who share the show's "Semper Fi; Do or Die" attitude, they will have a satisfying experience. *Dogfight* is filled with great singing and powerful performances. Pasek and Paul fans will be thrilled and impressed.

Running Time: Two hours and 10 minutes, with an intermission.



Zack Krajnyak as Birdlace. Photo by Maura McConnell.



Dogfight: The Musical plays through March 27, 2016 at The Media Theatre – 104 East State Street, in Media, PA. For tickets, purchase them [online](#).

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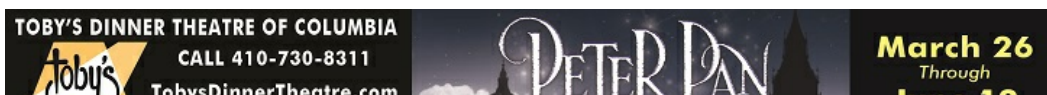
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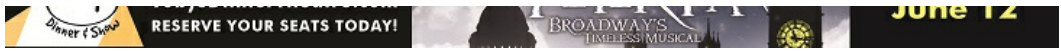
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