

Totem Pole opens 2012 season with music

By Barb Leese

Hurrah! It's summertime, and Totem Pole Playhouse has opened for the 2012 season.

If you love live theatre, you know why I'm excited. If you haven't tried it, pick a show and book one here, and try to pick something early in the season, so you can return later.

It is 1944 in wartime England, and the Brits are ready to welcome American Tex Riley and his band of singing cowboys, to Studio B at the BBC in London, to perform a show for British soldiers who are overseas.

Tex's producer shows up, but the other singers don't. So the producer, Mabel (Erin Lindsey Krom), gets to perform the roles of two female singers, while other office staff gets costumes and scripts and learn to sing, quickly!

It's a fun show, directed by David Hemsley Caldwell, who has returned to Totem Pole many times for musical revues.

James Fouchard touches all the right details with his scenery, a simple setting with the orchestra tucked on a low platform on the back of the stage, and wonderful signs that turn on and off to indicate when the performance is on the air, flanked by two "applause" signs.

Of course there is a BBC sign, and several references to fish and chips, in case you forgot where you were.

The actors are good, with my favorite being Bradley Wayne Smith as Stan, the shell-shocked soldier who handles sound effects and turns on and off his character with the "on air" sign. The musicians are excellent.

Erin Lindsey Krom runs the show, her producer role plus her energy and beautiful voice blending the show's disparate elements together. She also



Erin Lindsey Krom and Kevin Kraft appear in *Chaps! The Musical*, June 2-17 at Totem Pole Playhouse, for a special wartime performance on BBC radio.

brought the war into focus with a song declaring that soon the bluebirds will fly over the white cliffs of Dover ... and Junior will be able to sleep in his own room again.

There is very little plot here beyond the initial premise of the concert that didn't really happen, but it is a fun evening.

Chaps! The Musical is onstage through June 17.

Coming next is an adaptation of a Graham Greene novel, *Travels With My Aunt*, a whirl-

wind, world-wide tour running June 19 through July 1.

Then we're back to Tuna, Texas, for *Red, White and Tuna*, July 3-15, starring Wil Love and Ray Ficca.

Totem Pole Playhouse is in Michaux State Forest at Caledonia State Park, on the south side of U.S. Route 30 at the stoplight for Pa. 233.

For more details, call 717-352-2164 or 1-888-805-7056, or look online at www.TotemPolePlayhouse.org