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## REVIEWS

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Joseph Leo Bwarie and Beth Kennedy in the Troubadour Theatre Company's production of *Little Drummer Bowie* at the Falcon Theatre (Photo – Sherry Greczmiel)

# *Little Drummer Bowie*

Reviewed by Terry Morgan

Falcon Theatre

Through Jan. 15th

## RECOMMENDED

A Troubadour Theater Company holiday show has become a beloved local tradition, often selling out shortly after the dates are announced. There's good reason for this: Troubie shows are reliably hilarious and fun, combining the classic music of a particular artist with the interpretation of a well-known story. This year, which has been wildly unpleasant, definitely calls for a restorative tonic, and the Troubadours have delivered with a delightful reimagining of their 2005 show, *Little Drummer Bowie*.

In long ago Jerusalem, poor Ziggy (Joseph Leo Bwarie) has been wandering the desert after losing his parents in a mysterious event, with only his drum and pets for company. His drumming talents are appreciated by showman Ben Hamed (Riccardo Berdini) and Ben's assistant Ali (Beth Kennedy), who hire him to be part of their troupe. Quickly noticed by a talent agent (Rick Batalla), Ziggy becomes a huge star on his own, but an out-of-control ego may soon cause his star to fall.

Bwarie is terrific as Ziggy (short for Zigidiah, natch), his strong singing voice used to excellent effect in "Life on Mars" and a combination of "Lazarus" and "Wild Is the Wind". Berdini is charismatic and funny as Ben, delivering a solid rendition of "Fame," and Kennedy is consistently amusing as Ali, wildly twirling the tassel of her tiny fez. Batalla steals the show in multiple roles, from cavorting in a skimpy gold lame unitard to executing a killer phone gag. The entire group is outstanding — dancing and singing and altogether creating comedy gold.

Matt Walker and Bwarie's direction is fluid and expert, switching seamlessly from witty dialogue to improvised humor to Jordana Toback's tightly choreographed dance numbers. Eric Heinly's music direction honors the musical achievements of David Bowie, although at times the band is so loud that the lyrics couldn't clearly be heard. The uncredited script is bursting with wit, from the entrance of three recognizable Kings to fantastic puns on Major Tom and Vanilla Ice. Sharon McGunigle's costumes are many and lavish and JM Montecalvo's lighting is superb.

So if one is in the market for undiluted holiday cheer, *Little Drummer Bowie* is a guaranteed good time.

**Falcon Theatre, 4252 Riverside, Burbank; Wed. – Fri. 8 p.m., Sat. 4 p.m. & 8 p.m., Sun. 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.; through Jan. 15. [www.falcontheatre.com](http://www.falcontheatre.com). Running time: 90 minutes.**



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