

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

ALL BROOKLYN, ALL THE TIME

October 25, 2014

‘Hereafter Musical’ Takes A Joyful Look At The Afterlife



Vincent Favale and Frankie Keane are the creators of “Hereafter Musical,” opening Oct. 25 at the Snapple Theater in Manhattan.

**By Paula Katinas
Brooklyn Daily Eagle**

Death and the afterlife might not seem like ideal subjects for a joyful musical. But don’t tell that to Vincent Favale and Frankie Keane, the creators of “Hereafter Musical,” a show that seeks to depict how the living and the deceased think about each other.

“We want people to leave the theater smiling,” Favale told the Brooklyn Eagle in a recent interview.

“Hereafter Musical” is currently in previews at the Snapple Theater at 1627 Broadway (at 50th Street) Opening night is Oct. 25. The Snapple Theater is located on Broadway, but is technically considered an off-Broadway theater. The definition of whether a theater is Broadway

or off-Broadway is based on the number of seats in the house. Favale, a Bath Beach native who is a graduate of Saint Finbar School, William Grady High School and Brooklyn College, is the vice president of CBS and is the head of late night programming for the network. He is also well known for his many appearances on Howard Stern’s radio show. Keane, an actress, singer, and acting teacher, is a native of Chicago. “I love being a part of this project,” Keane told the Eagle. “When people come out of the theater and congratulate me, I feel like I can’t take the credit. The show is coming from a higher place.”

Keane also stars in the show. In addition to Keane, the cast includes Deborah Tranelli, Carolyn Mignini, Paul Blankenship, Pierce Cravens, Eileen Faxes, Courtney Capek and Michelle Cabinian. There is also a “Hereafter Choir” with singers Tanesha Gary, Kissy Simmons and Margaret Kelly. Terry Berliner is the show’s director-choreographer. Favale and Keane were also helped by Bill Persky, a legendary television writer who served as their mentor. Persky was the head writer for the “The Dick Van Dyke Show” and “The Mary Tyler Moore Show.”

The plot of “Hereafter Musical” revolves around three women who visit a psychic one afternoon seeking help in contacting their deceased loved ones. One of the women has just lost her mother. Another woman’s daughter committed suicide. The third woman lost her son several years earlier in an accident. “The women don’t know each other, but they bond very quickly,” Favale said.

Despite the subject matter, Favale said the show has a light touch. “There’s a lot of laughs in the beginning of the show. We have fun songs, as well as emotional songs,” he said.

The spirits of the three deceased characters also appear onstage. The show has an interesting plot twist: the spirits learn that if they make contact with their living relatives, they will disappear for earth and their loved ones will never be able to contact them again. The question is: will they make contact or won’t they?

The idea for “Hereafter Musical” came from Favale and Keane thinking about the losses they have endured in their lives. Two of Favale’s brothers died young. Keane has also seen death in her family. “I lost my mother when I was eight years old. I lost two siblings,” she said.

Favale said he was also affected by the deaths of his mother-in-law in 1994 and a young man from his neighborhood who was killed in a car crash in 2003. “I didn’t know him. But I was struck by something one day when I was visiting the scene of the accident. There were flowers there but there were also cars whizzing by. Life goes on,” he said.

Favale wrote a song about the incident called “Nineteen.” The song was the foundation of what was to become “Hereafter Musical.” For ticket information, call the Snapple Theater box office 212-921-7862 or visit www.hereaftermusical.com.