

REVIEWS:

'Saturday's Warrior' sequel is engaging, fast-paced

By [Carma Wadley](#), Deseret News

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"Saturday's Warrior" and its sequel, "The White Star," are on stage together in a two-part performance, marking the 35th anniversary of "Saturday's Warrior."

Is not being bad good enough? Why do bad things happen to good people? How much sacrifice is "enough"? What is "family" anyway? These are among the intriguing questions posed by "Saturday's Warrior/The White Star," a reprise and sequel, written by Doug Stewart and directed by Matt Neves, marking the 35th anniversary of the landmark production. Cleverly woven together into a whole, the show includes a revue of "Saturday's Warrior," narrated by the character of Pam Flinders, played with depth and emotion by Carrie Colton. It segues smoothly into the sequel, in which narration duties are taken over by Luke, a born-again convert who lives next door to the now grown Jimmy Flinders. Andrew Luke takes on this role, as well as that of Elder Kestler in the revue, with appropriate fervor and panache. The revue includes all the memorable songs and storylines, condensed a bit, but providing the perfect setup for "White Star." Although by the end of "Saturday's Warrior," rebellious teenager Jimmy Flinders has found his way — literally and figuratively — back home, the ensuing years have not exactly been easy on him, and at the beginning of "White Star," he is totally inactive in his faith. Now the father of four, he must still find his way back to the light. Casey Elliot does an amazing job as both young and older Jimmy, bringing not only credibility to the passing years, but also capturing the essence of the soul-wrenching processes he is caught up in. Jimmy and Pam, watching over the family from "the other side of the veil," continue in the same role. For the rest of the cast, those in the first part take on different roles in the second, and they all do it well, from the youngest members, Collin Worland and Morgan Tew, to the "ancestral" David Weeks and Shandra Worthen. Taylor Eliason is also very good as Matt, Jimmy's son, who plays a pivotal part in helping his dad find his way. And Jeff Long does well as Todd/Jubal. The cast has a nice chemistry that makes family connections believable and voices that do justice to the music. Lex de Azevedo did the songs for "Saturday's Warrior," and those tunes still hold up both musically and emotionally. The songs in "White Star" bear Janice Kapp Perry's indelible stamp. They are stirring and memorable, and while some tie integrally to the show, songs such as "Gentle Savior" could well become stand-alone classics. If you remember "Saturday's Warrior," you will enjoy this powerful continuation of the story. But even if you haven't seen the earlier production, you will be easily caught up in this engaging, fast-paced story. There is humor, but there are also tears. Ultimately, it is a story of love and redemption, of the importance of family, and the necessity of both faith and hope — in life, in the atonement and in the Savior. If you go... What: Saturday's Warrior/The White Star, Kent Where: Concert Hall, Logan, Monday; Cottonwood Auditorium When: June 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 23 More Information: 1-888-35-YEARS; running time: 2 hours 30

minutes (one intermission). Or visit LDSMusical.com for performance dates in Idaho, Nevada and Arizona and other information about the production.

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"White Star" Shines as New LDS Musical

By Laurie Williams Sowby

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It began with "Saturday's Warrior" more than three decades ago. Now Doug Stewart, the same man who started the LDS musical genre with his popular story (which follows a family from pre-existence through the trials of earthly life) has teamed up with Janice Kapp Perry to write "The White Star."

The musical takes its title from a symbol for Jesus Christ, who gives light to the world and to individual lives as well. The 90-minute production, directed by George Nelson, is fast-paced, entertaining, and chock full of good tunes sung by able performers. It's tighter and shorter than "Saturday's Warrior" but still carries a message of love and caring on opposite sides of the veil.

This time, the LDS family is not quite so perfect. Although there is a teenaged seminary dropout, Matt, who is a touch rebellious (played convincingly by Jared Young), he is just following the wishes of his returned-missionary-turned-inactive father (Alan Humpherys) - who would much rather see him accept a college tennis scholarship than serve a mission. The father's position naturally causes friction with other, more faithful members of the family, including his wife (Margo Watson), daughter (Anna Kaelin) and younger son (David Warr).

The engaging Josh Tenney nearly steals the show as Luke, the young, ebullient, scripture-quoting convert who lives next door and doesn't understand his neighbors' lack of enthusiasm for anything religious. He provides many comic moments in a story with serious overtones.

A tormented young man seeks help from beyond the veil in the musical production "White Star."

As it was in "Saturday's Warrior," it is the teenaged son who brings things to a head - after he sees in his dreams ancestors who prod him toward a testimony and urge him to make sure his father isn't left out of the family chain. Matt and his entire family gain strength from reading the experiences of their ancestors in a journal they find.

Those scenes featuring the ancestors, as well as one in Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion

are memorable. Audiences can also relate to the tension caused by other plot events and relationships among the characters.

The well-chosen cast features outstanding singing voices. Kudos go to A.J. Longhurst, Chuck Gilmore, Matt Dobson, David Weekes, Shoni Winkel, Laurel Warr, Katie Tenney, Leslie Nelson and Lucas Charon, as well as the "family" and "Luke."

The music varies from high-energy production numbers to tender solos and duets with fluid melodies. Although most fit nicely with the scenes, the segue from a tender scene toward the end into a rollicking gospel-rock-style number is jarringly out of character with the preceding scene. Still, it was the one the BYU Education Week audience applauded the most.

Other LDS audiences of all ages will likely enjoy "White Star" just as much.

"White Star" premiered during BYU Education Week and is set to travel in the western states after performances Sept. 7, 8, 14 and 15 at Timpview High School in Provo, Utah. Tickets and performance information are available online at www.whitestarmusical.com.