

British Theatre Guide

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Summer Holiday: The Musical

Michael Gyngell and Mark Haddigan

David King for Summer Holiday Theatre Ltd

The Lyric, Plymouth Theatre Royal

26–30 June 2018

As a '60s vehicle for an even fresher-faced-than-today Cliff Richard, *Summer Holiday* was a popular triumph of hit parade records over dramatic substance. And Michael Gyngell and Mark Haddigan's stage adaption is much the same with an added dose of nostalgia.

Dated, somewhat stilted and vacuous despite a fervent and athletic company, the star is undoubtedly the revamped bus complete with shower and kitchen sink—though a clean-cut (with tattoos carefully hidden) Ray Quinn vies for star billing.

The *X Factor* runner-up adopts a jolly japes accent, quiff and curled lip as cheeky chappie bus mechanic Don who avoids a rainy Clacton-on-Sea fortnight by refurbishing a bus and heading for the south of France. Along for the ride, the girls and the fun are buddies Steve (Billy Roberts), Edwin (Joe Goldie) and Cyril (Rory Maguire).

Stowaway starlette Barbara (Sophie Matthew) is on the run from harridan mother and renown—and soon has her sights set on the erstwhile "Batchelor Boy" after some cross-dressing confusion and some interesting agreement about "A Swinging Affair" being the formula for any couple's happiness.

Hot on their tyreremarks is Stella (a strident Taryn Sudding) and sidekick Jerry (a miscast Bobby Crush) providing silliness and slapstick aiming to milk the publicity and catch their meal ticket.

Distraction, diversions and dalliance care of a stranded girl group (instant love interest), hysterical bride, mime-loving border guards and livestock chuckathon rivals fill the gaps between a classic back catalogue including greats such as "Living Doll", "We Say Yeah", "Do You Wanna Dance?" and the eponymous "Summer Holiday".

A capable band, under the baton of musical director Rob Wicks, is a little let down by the sound design while Steve Howell's set is all European billboards and postcards on the proscenium and plenty of room for a rotating double decker.

The company's enthusiasm is faultless and harmonies good, the all-singing, all-dancing frothiness clearly appeals with a standing ovation on press night but, for me, "Time Drags By".

Reviewer: [Karen Bussell](#)