

# *Grease: Live*

By Linda Fitzpatrick

Last night *Grease: Live*, the newest addition to live musicals broadcasted on television, aired and it was just as electrifying as I hoped, filled with three hours of singing, acting, and of course, dancing. Each cast member brought something unique to their character, though some shined brighter than others. *Grease: Live* was also the first ever live musical to have a studio audience. The audience had the tendency to be distracting; however, during scenes in which it didn't feel misplaced to have a mass of people sitting around, they were a welcome addition to the already impressive production.

The most astounding performance of the evening came from Vanessa Hudgens who played the infamous Rizzo. Her performance was especially breathtaking with the news that her father died of cancer the night before and she was dedicating her performance to him.

Other shining stars included Keke Palmer (Marty) and her USO dream sequence of "Freddy My Love." Jordan Fisher (Doody) sang a beautiful guitar version of "Counterfeit" as well.

With all that said, the hidden all-stars of this live production were the people behind every camera. Seen through backstage footage, their roles were just as complex as the actors. Some hung from the ceiling while others ran with cameras strapped to their bodies. It was elaborate and the scenes looked beautiful on TV.

The most stunning scene of the musical came towards the end, with the car race of Grease Lightning. The shaky camera and spotty lightning allowed viewers to believe the two cars were speeding down a cement road beside each other. I will say, I expected more once I saw the flames light up the backside of Grease Lightning, but either way, the scene was well-executed.

For a live musical event, FOX lucked out with minimal issues. In fact, the only major slip up was the loss of audio during the beginning of the hand jive that lasted approximately 15 seconds. This technical error didn't take any of the joy away from the musical. I especially enjoyed the dance competition portion of the musical because the director switched from a colored screen to a black and white, old fashioned TV screen. The original Frenchy and her waitress friends were shown watching the live broadcast in the diner reminiscing on high school days.

While not everybody loved the modern remake of the classic movie, *Grease: Live* made bold decisions in its casting and production that allowed the show to be as fun and exciting to watch as the original. FOX raised the bar for all other live musical events and that is a wonderful thing for viewers. A line spoken by both Danny and Sandy sums up the essence of the musical. "What's the point of livin' if you don't take a few chances?" *Grease: Live* took chances and that made the musical that much more memorable.