

# “Get Ready” For A Show: A tempting musical catches an era

Okee dokee folks... The Temptations endured personnel changes, drug and alcohol abuse, racial tension, personal tragedy and still managed to come out on top, with timeless hits and a legacy that continues today. The Temptations musical *Ain't Too Proud*, based on the history of the singing group, opened to a full house at The Providence Performing Arts Center Tuesday night. The show relates the history of the band with lots of great music and energetic dance.

The stage set of a theatre façade and marquee that varied with projected words and images was the minimalistic backdrop for the almost constant song and dance that propelled *Ain't Too Proud*. The show is narrated by Otis Williams, portrayed by Marcus Paul James, as he tells the tale of the group's formation intermingled with songs by the Temptations as well as other singing group contemporaries such as the Supremes and Cadillacs.

Otis remarks at start of the musical journey that “There is no progress without sacrifice” and wonders if “The measure if it is worth the cost.” Williams seamlessly moves from singing and dancing to directing his dialogue towards the audience and imparting more of the Temptations' tale to them. The production takes place over the span of approximately 30 years: from the group's inception until the deaths of four of the original members.

The music is energetic and will have you tapping your feet and clapping your hands. The soundtrack includes classics such as “Ball Of Confusion,” “Get Ready,” “I Can't Get Next To You,” and about 28 more musical gems during the over two-hour show.

Marcus Paul James is the star as Otis Williams and he carries the weight of the story as the real life Williams carried the weight of The Temptations. The group's line-up changed over 20 times since its formation leaving Williams the only living original member. Elijah Ahmed Lewis perfectly captured David Ruffin's moves, vocal prominence and demons. Jalen Harris was brilliant as Eddie Kendricks. Every voice in this cast was outstanding and powerful. The dance moves were amazing and if you are a fan of performers jumping and landing in a split then this is definitely the right show for you! If you are not on your feet applauding at the finale then you must not have a musical soul. The audience applause and cheers for this were the loudest I have heard in quite a while.

If you a fan of Motown, The Temptations, dance, jukebox musicals and great performance then get to PPAC to experience *Ain't Too Proud-The Life and Times of the Temptations*. The show runs until April 17th. For more about this show and others at PPAC, “Speedo” over to [PPACRI.org](http://PPACRI.org)

You can listen to my interview with *Ain't Too Proud* star, Marcus Paul James on the Motif Magazine Roots Report Podcast at: [motifri.com/rootsreportpodcast/episode-11-marcus-paul-james/](http://motifri.com/rootsreportpodcast/episode-11-marcus-paul-james/) That's it for now. Thanks for reading (and listening)! [www.JohnFuzek.com](http://www.JohnFuzek.com)