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## Quartet will leave you glad you went Plaid

By **LOUIS B. HOBSON, CALGARY SUN**

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Plaid Tidings \* \* \* 1/2 stars

The Cornerstone Dinner Theatre's production of Plaid Tidings is a heavenly holiday diversion.

Back in 1964, Smudge, Jinx, Frankie and Sparky were on their way to perform a concert when their van was hit by a school bus. All the kids survived but the Plaids, as they called themselves, were heaven-bound.

In 1990's runaway hit Forever Plaid, the boys returned to do the concert they were robbed of by the accident.

Now they're back but this time they're not sure why.

It takes a clue from Rosemary Clooney (yes the jokes are that corny) for them to realize they're meant to spread warmth and good cheer through song.

That's precisely what happens at Cornerstone because the four singers director JP Thibodeau cast in his production can sell a groaner of a joke as well as they can a vintage '50s song and boy can they harmonize.

They get things rolling when they cover songs like Banana Boat Song, Stranger in Paradise, Mambo Italiano and Fever but the show really takes off when they tackle some classic holiday tunes.

They do a hilarious hip hop version of The Night Before Christmas and half-way through the old Steve Allen classic Cool Yule they do it in the style of West Side Story.

Jeffrey Sanders' nerdish Smudge gets nostalgic about his broken family while Clayton Labbe's Frankie put an edgy spin on such songs as Rudolph and Frosty.

Douglas Price's Sparky is all bluster while Oliver Bailey's chronically shy Jinx is perpetually like a reindeer caught in the headlights. By the time they shuffle off to paradise with Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas their mission of spreading good cheer has been royally accomplished.

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