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Review

Fate

by [Megill & Company](#)

Obsession destroys the love and the lives of Elizabeth and William in the midst of The Great War, but *Fate* gives love a chance to flourish once again in this powerful and unusual world premiere musical filled with writer and composer **Heather Megill's** stunning and sublime score and her knack for epic storytelling.

The epic story begins in the quaint city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1918. Mrs. Porter is the kind and earthy widow raising her daughter Elizabeth while they share their house with a border named James and the ghost of her late husband Mr. Porter (unheard and unseen by the other actors, but patiently and lovingly close to his wife throughout).

As America enters World War I, James and Elizabeth go to Europe to help the cause with James going to the front lines and Elizabeth working at an army hospital as a nurse. There Elizabeth tactfully fends off the unwelcome advances of the obsessed James who has convinced himself that they

are both deeply in love with each other. When Elizabeth meets and falls in love William, a soldier in the same regiment as James, the furious James warns William to watch his back on the battlefield. It's a threat on which James follows through. But shattered by the loss of William and feeling pressured to marry James, more than one life will be lost. As the unseen ghost of William implores her to stop, Elizabeth takes a gun out of a chest and takes her own life. This riveting end to the first act ends with an ensemble of ghosts, now including William and Elizabeth, promising that their story is not yet over – that they will *Live Again*.

Megill & Company and Carlsbad Community Theatre have put together an exceptional cast to bring this tale to the stage for its huge premiere. In perhaps the biggest casting coup, San Diego's remarkable **Eric Anderson** (who was also in the concept CD of *Fate* put together five years ago) creates the role of the



dangerously jealous and vindictive James, expertly portraying both the lovesick, delusional James who refuses to see that Elizabeth does not love him, and the hateful James who will let nothing stand in the way of him having the object of his obsession. **Karensa LeGear** shines as that object, the beautiful Elizabeth who glows in the glory of newfound love with William, adroitly and subtly demonstrates her awkwardness in dealing with the affections of James, and whose divine operatic voice leaves you spellbound with her every song. As William, **Brian Maples** has both a smooth voice and a feel for portraying the kind of optimistic good guy who could win the heart of a character like Elizabeth.

With a gorgeous voice of her own, **Lauren Gira** provides most of the few but effective lighter moments of the evening as fellow nurse and Elizabeth's best friend Emily, her natural comic sense deftly creating this initially amusing character with a sharp wit who cares only for romance and physical attraction, with little patience for anything more concrete. But when her new husband Matt (**Eric Hellmers**) is killed in battle, followed immediately by the death of William and the suicide of her best friend Elizabeth, Emily takes a more sober and serious approach to her life that will affect the fates of all. Lauren and Eric are charming together as they play a mean game of poker for the most unusual wedding proposal and acceptance. Eric also joins Brian Maples in the hauntingly beautiful *Look at the Stars* as Eric lies dying from his wounds on the battlefield, ghosts of other soldiers eventually rising and walking towards a bright light, in the end the dying Eric and still living Brian seeing different sources of light as they "look at the stars."



Another staple of local musical theatre and another member of the original concept CD, **Cathy Gene Greenwood**, recreates her role as the widow Mrs. Porter, capturing the woman's kindness and heartiness, and delivering the beautiful duet *I Remember* as she joins the rich voice of her deceased husband (**Rich LaFetra**). The ensemble includes Sara Elliott's lovely singing of *Bring My Boy Back*, a hilarious scene between Emily and her two patients played by **Matt Tucker** and **Kevin Klauber**, some great dancing at a club choreographed by **Beth Megill** and led by the exceptional dancing **Allison Easterbrooks**, and a chorus that adds so much to the show throughout – especially as ghosts who join with the living in so many mesmerizing, chilling, and touching scenes. This new work is off to an impressive premiere, and will hopefully be even further refined in future productions so that more audiences can enjoy and be moved by this music and story.

[\(Listen to clips from the show\)](#)

Performances through August 1, 2004.

[Rob Hopper](#)

San Diego Playbill

~ Cast ~

Elizabeth/Maggie: Karensa LeGear
William/David: Brian Maples
James: Eric Anderson
Mrs. Porter: Cathy Gene Greenwood
Mr. Porter: Rich LaFetra
Emily: Lauren Gira
Matt/Ben: [Eric Hellmers](#)

~ **Featured Ensemble** ~

Club Singer: Sara Elliott
Ghost Boy: Jarvis Haren
Walter/Messenger: Brian Gemmell
Ronald Peterson: Ed Ewert
Gloria Peterson: Charlene Buhlert
Pregnant Woman: Emily O'Brien
Hospital Patient: [Matt Tucker](#)
German Mother: Bebe Brodie
German Girl: Alexa Bergman
Woman in Club: [Catherine McEniry](#)
Robert: Greg Goble
Couple in Park: Mary Nelson, Ed Ewert
Doctors: Paul Fenner, Anthony Streano
Newsboy: Jacob Haren
Waiter: [John Cardenas](#)
Soldier's Girlfriend: Deidre Haren
Women on Train: Anna Pacheco, Judy Sperling
Boy on Train: Davin Curtis
Ghost Woman/Nurse: Amy McDowell
Flower Shop Owner: [Lydia Lesar](#)
Conductor/Priest: Jim Chardi
Family at Table:
Genevieve Koesling
Kyre Wilcox
Janie Escalle

~ **Featured Dancers** ~

[John Cardenas](#)
[Allison Easterbrooks](#)
Tristan Faulk-Webster
Brian Gemmell
Lyndsey Gemmell
Greg Goble
[Ryan Johnson](#)
Hayley Kelly
[Stephen LaFata](#)
[Lydia Lesar](#)



Ben McLain
Beth Megill
Kelee Thompson
[Matt Tucker](#)
Brouge Wright

~ **Ensemble** ~

[Mallory Arquilla](#)
Charlotte Bailey
Nate Cargill
Jennefer Gillette
Karina Gillette
Therese Holladay
Heidi Kendrick
[Kevin Klauber](#)
Tyler Leslie
Maggie McEniry
Anne Moyer
Gabe Nunez
Pamela Rotta
Veronica Rotta
Katie Umlor
Grant Waters
Adrian Webster

Director/Musical Director: Heather Megill
Choreographer/Assistant Director: Beth Megill
Stage Manager: Chris Reba
Lighting Design: Richard Hellstern
Costume Design: Jane Craig-Jones, Sue Team
Sound Design: Jeff Polunas
Set Design: Bill Fortmueller