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PACIFIC COAST REP HAS A FULL THROTTLE CELEBRATION OF THE GENIUS OF COLE PORTER

February 1, 2017 | by Vince Mediaa



IT'S DELIGHTFUL, IT'S DELICIOUS, IT'S DE-LOVELY – IT'S 'ANYTHING GOES' AND BRING AN EXTRA CHAMPAGNE GLASS

Pacific Coast Rep you are the Top, the ANYTHING GOES cruise ship has parked in Pleasanton Ca at the Firehouse stage through February 12th and it is de-lovely. The PCR continues its 6th season of great theatre with this Cole Porter classic. This pop of a champagne bottle is sure to bring a smile to anyone who attends this "De- Lovely" excuse for song and dance. Back in 1934 when this show premiered with a young Ethel Merman, it was considered a bit risque, but this company reminds us that no matter how mindless this ship is, ANYTHING GOES is an American classic.



Creative Director of PCT, David Judson, assembled an excellent cast to bring some of Porter's best tunes to this revival. "You're the Top", "I get a Kick Out of You" "It's De-Lovely" and "Friendship". Some of the songs have been added along the way of this show's history on stage. The script was written by creator P.G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton and revised before its 1934 opening by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse. The show was later rewritten for its 1987 and 2011

Broadway revivals.

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Director Judson says, "I am absolutely thrilled to work with this big, professional cast. Anything Goes features incredible Cole Porter music and fantastic dancing, including tap. This show is sure to have our audience humming the famous tunes and tapping their feet as they watch this spectacle". This 21 member cast is on course – everyone of them from the A list of local stages.



The swank Joy Sherratt as Reno Sweeney controls this ship, belting out Porter's songs, she opens with the classic "I Get A Kick Out Of You". Her co star on stage is Tim Wagner as the dapper Billy Crocker, and they both charm the Firehouse sold out theatre with "Your The Top". Sherratt also is infectious in the icon tap dance number "Anything Goes" choreographed by Suzanne Brandt, it includes the whole company in a rousing classic way to close a first act.

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June 25, 2019



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WITH A WONDERFUL
CAST
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The story, of course, a love sitcom with all the standard plot twists and madness of 40's musicals. It still holds strong even with the Asian racism still intact --two fun Asian actors play the guys Patrick Maravilla and Michael Yi. The show is comedic throughout, featuring star-crossed lovers, mistaken and hidden identities, and enough one-liners and slapstick to keep the audience giggling on a sea of laughter.



The young stockbroker Billy Crocker is played savvy by Wagner, who at times shows off his first rate voice. Crocker is in love with debutante Hope Harcourt played by Amy Franklin Leonards who is set to marry Sir Oakleigh, played by local favorite Chris Vettel. Vettel brings a class act of comic timing to this show, and he is so fun to watch on stage and adds that professional class to this already impressive cast.



The standout Michael Gaffney plays the blinded boss misdirected throughout the story; Gaffney has played the same role at Center Rep and is always excellent in any role we get to see him perform in. The frisky Ali Lane plays Hope's mom, Mrs Harcourt, with her furry dog in her arms; she is very funny in the role. The vintage spoken lines, Porter's clever lyrics, are fast-paced enough to get lost in the flow if not expertly handled. In less polished productions the story can become merely a vessel for the songs. This certainly doesn't happen on the Firehouse stage. Every word is crisp and clear thanks in part to Sound Designer, Karl Haller, and Music Director, Brett Strader, allowing laughs as the pacing is electric.



The story embraces the "Guys and Dolls" perfection as the low end, comic sidebar gangster, Moonface Martin played by D'Ambrosie who provides some of the best humor for this ride. The brilliant Melissa Mombosse plays Erma the female gangster and is perfect in "Buddie Beware". The female leads are dressed to shine by Margaret daSilva's gowns; they at times become the show. Reno is always in satin and the tap dancing is highlighted by the brilliant costumes.



The art deco of the ship is also a scene stealer, designed by Patrick Brandon, his set is so very elegant. Brandon has the orchestra built into the upper deck of the ship and set. We have seen this ship on many stages with the two staircases and many doorways to get the actors in and out, but Brandon's set is one of the stars of this show. The six piece orchestra is perched on the upper level of the ocean liner set, under the direction of music director Strader, and brings Porter's tunes to perfect melody.

Tap dancing is, of course, what we come to see on this ship and Brandt's choreography is wonderful highlighted by the high stepping "Anything Goes". The shadows of color light bouncing off ship changes colors to set the many hilarious "who is on first" moments designed by Maxx Kurzunski, and follow a spot that keeps our eye on target with so many shticks that come and go in the madcap tale. Sherratt is excellent, almost upstaging the main cast, her powerhouse voice is impressive in "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" is a show stopper, and the company is at their best.



Other players to mention include the classy sailor company including the tall and talented Jordan Smith as Fred the bartender. The sexy glam Angels that shadow Reno include Jenna Harris,

Janice Engelgau, Caroline Noel, and the high kicking Libby Lloyd. The dizzy Captain and ship's assistant are played by Scott Maraj and Andrew Mondello who both have great comic timing. Dustin Riggs has a short walk on as Dobson the minister before he is escorted off the ship in handcuffs. Rob Schoemehl, Carolyn Bacon and Julia Portillo all fill in for passengers and crew and truly keep the show bright and a delight.



Throughout the show, the cast is universally strong and apparently delighted to be singing and dancing together. Director Judson keeps this production's impressively high energy; you get wonderful positive feeling coming from the stage. ANYTHING GOES is an Icon of American Musical history and a delight. This company is the best way to start your winter theatre season, don't miss this fun. Bring your own champagne glass, tickets are going fast so book soon.



Pacific Coast Repertory Theatre presents
The Classic Cole Porter musical

Anything Goes

Music and Lyrics by Cole Porter Original Book by P.G.
Wodehouse & Guy Bolton and Howard Lindsay & Russel
Crouse New Book by Timothy Crouse & John Weidman

Directed by David Judson,

Music Direction Brett Strader

Choreography Suzanne Brandt

Through: February 17

Firehouse Arts Center

4444 Railroad Ave, Pleasanton, CA 94566

Running time: 2 hours and 15 minutes,
one intermission



Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/Pacific-Coast-Repertory-Theatre-208330324917/>
tickets at <http://www.pcrtproductions.org> or www.firehousearts.org

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The show will run through February 12, 2017: Fridays, 2/3 & 2/10 at 8pm; Saturdays, 1/28 & 2/4 & 2/11 at 8pm; Saturday matinees, 2/4 & 2/11 at 2pm; and Sunday matinees 1/29 & 2/12 at 2pm.

Tickets are \$19-\$40 each, and are available at the Firehouse Arts Center Box Office, by phone at (925) 931-4848, or online at www.pcrtproductions.org or www.firehousearts.org.

