

Bay Area Critic-at-Large

Anything Goes: South Valley Civic Theatre: Young Cast Nails It!

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Gregory M. Alonzo

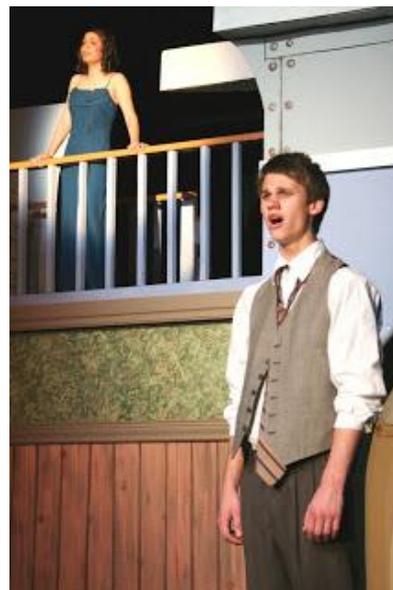
The perennial community theatre favorite, this '30s musical farce by Cole Porter is performed with a marvelous savoir-faire by a troupe of teen actors. They approach the material with a professionalism and dedication to their craft that belies their age.



The staging, a challenge considering the large cast, was obviously well-thought-out and executed without a major hitch. To her credit, Janell Cummings' direction is uncompromising and it pays dividends. Notwithstanding the varying degrees of vocal talent, each member is fearless in their rendition of the Porter standards. And the choral numbers are performed with an infectious ebullience that elicits goose bumps!

The cast is uniformly fine. Taylor Barnes, as Billy Crocker, brings an impressive versatility and enthusiasm to the numerous wacky disguises he dons during

the course of the zany events. Saskia Vinkhuyzen is perfectly cast as the worldly, sultry-voiced Reno Sweeny. The naturally mature resonance of her voice lends credibility to her role as an evangelist-turned-nightclub singer. Supported by a talented ensemble, her several choral numbers are genuine show-stoppers!



Wonderful supporting comic turns are given by Matthew Cummings, Oscar Leon, Katie Rounds, Nicole LaJeunesse, Pascale Vinkhuyzen, and Chris Bezanson, each showcasing an exceptional, innate comic sense and solid grasp of their respective characters. They're all quite entertaining!

Of particular note is Rebecca Inderhees as Hope Harcourt. She possesses a remarkable poise and stage presence, not to mention an outstanding singing technique, that are equal to what one might see in a professional venue in San Francisco or even on Broadway. Her timing and reactions are superb. Her success as an actress is inevitable should that be where her passion lies.

The costume design is first-rate and true to the period-some of the gowns are truly breathtaking! And one can readily discern the care and attention to detail given to both the choreography and set design. Overall, a pleasant surprise that exceeded my expectations by far. This company of players deserves your support!