



## **ROSE BOWL ADJUDICATION**

**NAME OF COMPANY:** BRISTOL MUSICAL THEATRE

**NAME OF PRODUCTION:** 'CRAZY FOR YOU'

**VENUE:** The Redgrave Theatre

**DATE:** Saturday 4th May 2019

**ADJUDICATOR:** Laura Corradi Loughran

'Crazy For You,' is packed with well-known or familiar numbers of the Gershwin catalogue, providing the audience with heart-warming nostalgia. This award winning musical is full of romance, comedy bordering on farce, and an abundance of lively dancing – a choreographer's dream, and by no means an easy feat.

Where the production as a whole excelled, was in the excellent fluidity and integration. Every scene change was part of the performance. Having the cast in charge of the scene changes allowed for continuous action and therefore moved this production along with continuous energy. The Direction and Choreography were intrinsically linked, working hand in hand as a great partnership.

This was a thoroughly engaging, energetic and entertaining production, culminating to a well-deserved standing ovation. Congratulations.

### **STAGING**

The overture painted a picture and took the audience into the world of 'Crazy For You' with ease, from the follies stage to the street scenes, there was excellent detail such as the wig mistresses, the stage sweeper, the choreography of the Follies, all working in sync between movement and choreography.

I enjoyed the Follie Girls exit, saying 'Goodnight Mr Zangler' in ever increasing pitch, it gave us an instant insight into their collective character, as did the tottering about on their heels across the show.

Bobby's audition in K-RA-ZY FOR YOU worked well with a simplistic tap routine ending with the stomp on Mr. Zangler's foot, the choreography worked well to ensure it was noticeable when the step reoccurred throughout the production.

Having Irene and Lottie on the balcony stage left and stage right above Bobby, created a good picture and made excellent use of the set into I CAN'T BE BOTHERED NOW, where creative use of entrances for the show girls took place. Coming up through the trap doors and through the auditorium was inspired. The tap routine was well executed, a little more attention in leg placement of the girls when feet apart or together would have perfected it. I especially enjoyed the precision of sharp head movements of the girls when sitting on the steps with the phones and the bum shuffles back. The final time step wasn't quite in sync but forgiven with the abundance of energy in the execution followed by the exit back through the audience with girlish glee and chatter.

THINGS ARE LOOKING UP, was effective. Bobby performed the physicality of the movement very well, sitting up and sinking back down. Having the scene change occur against the carrying of Bobby around the stage worked extremely well and another example of the fluidity I have previously mentioned.

SHALL WE DANCE, showed a very good understanding of dance stylistics. Bobby and Polly partnered well, with good soft shoe, and a good hold during the waltz section. Polly, could have extended her outward arms right through to the fingertips for an enhanced line. The end pose was beautiful and reminiscent of any old Hollywood movie.

GIRLS ENTER NEVADA, was a lovely introduction to the two worlds combining. I liked the addition of the guitar and harmonica for the relaxed cowboys against the sharp poses and hip swaying choreography of the Follies girls. The use of suitcases provided further levels and interest to the number as a whole.

Across the production the pretend Wild West shootouts and stage slaps from Polly were directed and executed with excellence. I especially enjoyed the cuckoo clock fiasco, which was a perfect example of how action, actors, sound, and set design worked in harmony. Fantastic.

The use of the string in SLAP THAT BASS was visually effective - good core ladies. It was lovely to see the full cast fill the stage towards the end of the number, although it did mean the last few steps were a bit sloppy.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Fodor's first scene. They had a great detail to their characters, for example the style of handshakes. Lank's turn around in character to please them was very good, and charming.

I GOT RHYTHM, is a number that most Musical Theatre fans know and therefore expectations were high - you didn't disappoint. It was full of energy and the cast looked like they were enjoying every step. Great patterns were created, with special touches such as Polly being pushed around stage in a wheel barrow. The linear handography and clapping sequence was a joy. Great end to the act.

It was an excellent decision to have the cast on stage when the audience returned from the interval. It enhanced the integration which had been executed so well in Act One.

A directorial highlight came in Act Two in the exquisite mirroring between Bobby and Mr. Zangler. The detail was excellent, from each chew, serviette dab, gargle and speech of the lines 'She doesn't want me' and 'Bella, Bella, Bella.' I'm sure this took a lot of rehearsal and it paid off. The precision of the movement segued beautifully into their WHAT CAUSES THAT number with the chair tipping sequence, bottle sequence and dancing in sync which was executed very well.

Lank's outburst to Irene's condescending attitude was great. I loved the physical choice of pulling down the sign and stopping on it in a childish tantrum. The British head wobble in STIFF UPPER LIP was amusing and I especially liked the Les Mis red flag waving to finish – a comical number.

NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT was another showstopper, the circling around Bobby especially effective. The ending could have been sharper when stomping on the ripped up deed. Big group huddle that Tess orchestrated was well done, it was nice to see the individual reactions of the ensemble.

The FINALE was majestic. I was pleased to see the feathers have an outing. It was great to have a traditional curtain call for the style of production. The lowering and rising of the curtain added a touch of class and nostalgia.

The continuation of action through the exit music, had lovely detail, for example Lottie's acceptance of Polly with an embrace, and the picture perfect over the shoulder final glances of Bobby and Polly. Another example of detailed integration.

### **Musical Direction & Sound**

The sound was exceptionally well balanced throughout. I could hear every word of dialogue and every lyric. The sound was especially well executed during saloon scenes where every word clear against the ensemble's atmospheric chatter.

The sound effects, such as the car and vacuum cleaner were well chosen and authentic.

Timing of Sound worked harmoniously with the Orchestra and action on stage, a highlight being the cuckoo clock sequence which was timed to perfection.

The orchestra was under excellent direction, as were the cast. I was pleased to see the use of the monitors and it ensured the cut offs were spot on. There was precision in the direction that was clear in moments such as SLAP THAT BASS, where the Bass in the orchestra was perfectly in sync with the action on stage.

The ensemble sound was balanced, with excellent harmonies, especially in GIRLS ENTER NEVADA, NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT and the FINALE. The vocal quality of the top sopranos was especially strong. I enjoyed the simplicity of BIDIN' MY TIME, the excellent Rag piano during THE REAL AMERICAN FOLKSONG and the great range of sound created with the onstage percussion during I GOT RHYTHM.

On the whole the vocals didn't suffer through the vigorous dance sequences, apart from SLAP THAT BASE, where they weakened towards the end, which impaired the strength of the ending a little.

The Orchestra were in their own right a highlight of the production, every song was played with an understanding of the genre and empathic to the demands of the performers. Superb.

### **Set**

The set was very well designed. The raised platform provided a good use of levels, increasing entrances for the cast as well as housing the orchestra. For this production I thought having the orchestra on stage was definitely the correct choice and in keeping with the style of the genre. There were great zones created across the stage which allowed the action to flow seamlessly, an example being the OVERTURE, where we could clearly pick out on stage for the Follie Girls into the street scene. The Saloon was furnished simply, which allowed the cast a slick scene change. I liked how this was adapted in Act two to 'Chez Lank', with the addition of cloths on the hay barrels. The design of the cuckoo clock breaking with a burst of feathers was visually stunning, and the hanging moon was a nice nod to the original design.

A clear, concise and effective design across the board that enhanced the directorial vision of seamless fluidity across the production.

### **Lighting**

The lighting enhanced the action without being intrusive. Well Done. The changes of states between the action and the scene changes were especially effective. There were some lovely details such as the Footlights upstage representing the follies stage, which came to great use, especially at the end of the overture when brightened and the night sky behind the orchestra. The cues were spot on throughout, and everyone was well lit, there wasn't a single moment when a face was in shadow.

## **Costume**

The beautiful follies girl costumes made me wish to be a part of your production myself, they lit up the stage with sparkle upon their overture entrance and in NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT. The addition of feathers for the finale was perfection. The contrast between the Follies and the Cowboys was clear. The Fodor's were stereotypically period British which worked well with the character portrayal. On the whole the costume enhanced the production greatly. A mention must be made of the wigs also, which looked fantastic.

## **CAST**

### **POLLY BAKER**

You had a great sense of this feisty tom boy of a character. Your stage slaps were well done and you danced with grace. Your vulnerability came through. You sustained the accent well throughout. You have a strong singing voice and went between speech and song with ease. As a general note, you could have added a wider use of dynamics across your songs. Starting from a smaller place in your ballads would help blend your chest voice into your upper register, as well as adding dramatic interest and a wider range of intention. I enjoyed your portrayal of SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME and your choice to speak the line 'haven't found him yet', just be careful to not split the phrases when choosing where to take breathes. Overall an accomplished and confident performance, with good skills across all disciplines. You found the heart of Polly and looked as though you enjoyed every minute of that discovery.

### **BOBBY CHILD**

An extremely difficult role, you definitely had a task to do, and you did it very well. Your imitation of Zangler was excellent and I enjoyed your nervous behavior during EMBRACEABLE YOU. You have a strong voice, which shone in your use of sustain on the final 'away' in CAN'T TAKE THIS AWAY FROM ME. You ooze charm when you dance, which allowed you to get away with moves that were not as precise as they could have been, for example you needed a stronger core on the waltz turns during NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT. You partnered and complimented Polly well and had a good grasp of comic timing, providing the punch lines with wit and sophistication. Good Work.

### **IRENE ROTH**

A well delivered performance. Your mannerisms reminded me of an Oscar Wilde leading lady and I especially enjoyed your cutting remarks to Lottie. Your change of character when falling for Lank was comical and I enjoyed your fun and frivolous portrayal of NAUGHTY BABY – good vocal tone with lovely use of vibrato, just be careful not to slide up and down across the notes too much. You handled the choreography with ease and had a lovely presence on the stage.

## **LOTTIE CHILD**

Don't we all know somebody just like this? You captured this somewhat overbearing mother with ease, and your turbulent relationship with Irene was highly amusing. You kept up appearances whilst still showing an underlying care for your son. I especially liked your reaction to meeting Everett for the first time. An expressive performer.

## **BELA ZANGLER**

You must have had a lot of fun playing this role. Your accent was clear throughout and you are to be commended for the mirroring section with Bobby, it was exquisite. A solid vocal performance. Your flirtatious nature with Tess and nonchalant attitude to the fact you had a wife was charming.

## **LANK HAWKINS**

A great part for you – the baddie we loved to hate. You played the role with ease. Your change of character when pleasing the Fodders was charming and your aiming to please comic. Your response to Irene and her contempt was lovely especially when you had enough and went into your tantrum.

## **COMPANY**

This show was very much an ensemble effort. Everyone had their place on that stage. The Follies were vocally strong and executed the choreography well. The Cowboys contrasted with their laid back nature and were very funny when learning the girl's routine. The energy was abundant and your smiles during the curtain call clear.

*Thank you for your warm welcome and your hospitality and I look forward to many more performances at this theatre.*