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An (almost) ALL MALE Production of *The Boys from Syracuse* — **Rollicking!**

Posted on February 17, 2018 by Alix Cohen in Playing Around

“Director Jonathan Cerullo’s limber imagination shapes the tuneful 1938 show into a vaudeville meets musical romp cast entirely – but for one-of men!”

“the experience is thoroughly enjoyable.”

“Successfully executing this kind of daft, precision humor in a matter of a mere three weeks is something of a marvel. Ethan Steimel’s scrupulous Lighting Design aides and abets freeze-frames and a waka-waka Harpo horn which punctuates ba-dump-dump moments – not one held too long.”

“The small stage is artfully occupied from the band on a balcony, up and down various ladders, and onto the theater floor by a predominantly talented and entirely game company. Let the shindig begin!”

“an inspired piece of physical casting”

“Creative Directorial moments include in part: the tale of the shipwreck told in puppet cut-outs, shadow play, searching the audience for “an honest man,” an unexpected, hat and cane soft shoe, spoken sound effects, clever acknowledgement of lyrics ahead of their time, tongue-in-cheek, synchronized movement, well-engineered fisticuffs... Jonathan Cerullo keeps his cast taut and quick, almost none of them self-conscious about farce. Staging is aesthetically appealing and fluid, choreography fun; vivacious high spirits sustained.”



BEYOND BROADWAYREVIEWS

WHERE THE BOYS ARE: ‘THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE’

By Bobby McGuire

“this all- (well mostly) male production of *The Boys from Syracuse* is reminiscent in style of San Francisco’s notorious acid-laced drag troupe The Cockettes and Charles Busch’s famed Theater in Limbo.”

“But the real star of the show is director Jonathan Cerullo. With the generous use of double takes, broad asides and even broader physical comedy (accentuated in Three Stooges form by bells, blocks and whistles), Cerullo breathlessly zips his cast of nearly 20 bodies around the minuscule Lion Theatre stage like it was the Winter Garden.”

“What’s most skillful about Cerullo’s hand is how the evening stays true to the original material even when it wades into some now-culturally insensitive waters. This was exemplified in the Act Two opener “Ladies of the Evening” where a policeman sings about rounding up prostitutes in the morning for some potential cop-hooker romance.” Not exactly PC in today’s post-Weinstein climate. Instead of cutting the number {...} Cerullo has his company hold up disclaimer placards that read: “This song was written in 1938.” A final card reading “Times Up” was flipped by a shrugging Madeline Hamlet (the only woman in the cast).

Theater Review: 'The Boys from Syracuse' At Theatre Row's Lion Theatre

• Reviews

by Jacquelyn Claire - February 23, 2018

This (almost) all male cast of "The Boys from Syracuse" are more effervescent than a fountain of Moët, more energized than the peloton at the Tour de France and more versatile than a bobby pin. They aren't just reviving an old 1938 George Abbott, Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart classic; they seem to be jump starting a Cadillac Sixty Special. So much gorgeous style wrapped up in a sleek vintage frame.

Director and choreographer, Jonathan Cerullo has created an exceptional explosion of craft, timing and talent. His staging is inspired. It's like watching a Broadway hit contained in a cupboard or small garage. Along with the gifted scenic designer, Joshua Warner, they have transformed the smallish space of the Lion into a pop-up book of possibilities. The stage seems to expand to fit the needs of the number. They seem to be able to coax space out of thin air. The band sit high in the rafters above the stage as if on a cumulonimbus cloud and the 1930's melodies float down like life-giving rain. Cerullo paints every possible stage moment with some delicious creativity.

It's an ensemble masterpiece with every single performer bringing 100% commitment and focus. They execute this slick production with precision and passion. It's a joy to watch them work.

It's so good to take a little trip back in time to immerse yourself in the sound and soul of another era.



The Boys from Syracuse

Fully staged all-male revival (plus one ringer) in the style of vaudeville and burlesque without the stripping for the Rodgers and Hart classic musical comedy.

Posted on February 18, 2018

by Victor Gluck,

Editor-in-Chief in Musicals, Off-Broadway, Still Open

"Director/choreographer Jonathan Cerullo has also upped the ante by staging it in a vaudeville/burlesque style as though this were a Marx Brothers stage show"

"it is certainly an elaborately worked out show"

"Cerullo's production is as busy and frenetic as one remembers vaudeville stage shows and Marx Brothers movies" ...
"it is all meticulously worked out"

"Dear Old Syracuse" into a delightful soft shoe number complete with straw hats and canes"

"the show has been eroticized and there is a "wink wink" feeling to the overall approach"

"The set by Joshua Warner resembles a carnival side show, Ethan Steimel's sophisticated lighting changes for each of the musical numbers"

"Musicals Tonight! has entered a new era with this full production"



Funny, Entertaining, Audacious

michael

February 18th, 2018

See it "if You love Rodgers and a Hart and camp and slap-stick and cross-dressing and vogueing and great songs and did I say camp?"

Don't see it "if you like your musicals straight, literally and figuratively."

Also, "This is definitely not your grand-fathers "The Boys From Syracuse". It's stripped down, souped up and sassy. Based on Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors, this production takes the Elizabethan tradition of an all-male company and turns it on its head. It's raucous, bawdy and very funny. Kudos to Mel Miller and the whole gang for a terrific entertainment."

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Funny, Delightful,

Great writing, Great singing, Great staging

Bart

February 16th, 2018

See it "if you enjoy a fresh take on a classic musical comedy. Outrageous and campy and fun."

Also, "This production might as well be called A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Syracuse. Pure burlesque with most of the female roles being played by male actors."

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#### MARK SAVITT AND EVA HEINEMANN REVIEW

#### THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE

<http://facebook.com/hidramas>

MARK SAVITT: "Musicals Tonight!'s revival of Rodgers and Hart's "The Boys From Syracuse" is an absolute campy joy."

"The bawdy musical... is performed almost exclusively by men. (the one exception is Madeline Hamlet.) This allows us to experience the stereotyped cartoonish comments about women more as social role phenomena than as biological imperatives."

"Musicals Tonight! is spiffier than ever with a great Greek set with movable columns, motifs from take-out coffee containers, masks of tragedy and comedy and other treasures. The choreography is full out period vaudeville, jazz, and nods to more recent styles. The costumes are also a joy."

"All in all, this is one of the most wonderful revivals I've ever seen."

## ABSOLUTE HAPPY FACE

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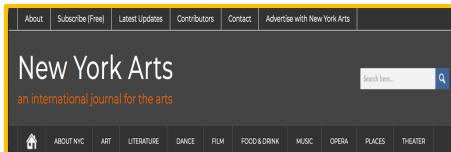
EVA HEINEMANN: "For once Mark Savitt and I are in complete ecstatic agreement."

Madeline Hamlet as the sole female was used in a very clever manner. The entire cast was having so much fun up there that it was infectious."

"This was the slickest Musicals Tonight! and everyone should be commended for bringing this joyous romp back to dear old New York. This feels so good!"

HAPPY HAPPY FACE

Tweet: 6_Second_Review: THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE--Rodgers and Hart revival from Musicals Tonight! is a true delight.



Back to Syracuse. Musicals Tonight! present Rogers & Hart's The Boys from Syracuse

by Mari S. Gold,
February 19, 2018

"The idea is original and mostly effective."

"played here like classic farce with characters running on and offstage, pratfalls, honking horns and lots of physical comedy."

"Cerullo has directed the action with verve and energy, wisely deciding to let the marvelous score with music by Richard Rogers and lyrics by Lorenz Hart, shine."

- Laurie Lawson -

www.eljny.com

"Directed and choreographed by Jonathan Cerullo, this presentation is campy, clever, and plain-out fun."

"Classic favorites maintain their 1930's style while being updated with absurdity. And the choreography is creatively silly and amazingly enjoyable."

"guaranteed to provide plenty of chuckles and belly laughs. The ensemble is both talented and nonsensical, and a fantastic time is had by all. Put THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE on your Must-See List."



THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE AT MUSICALS TONIGHT!

POSTED ON FEB 18, 2018 IN [THEATER REVIEWS](#)

by Peter Haas

"It's difficult to select individual actors above others for the excellence of their performances ... fun was on the menu, and fun was decidedly delivered."



The Boys from Syracuse

By Eugene Paul

"Raffish. Rambunctious. Ridiculous. Deliberately. Gay. Very. Enjoyable. Very." A totally pro shambles.

"For its 20th season , the producing entity, Musicals Tonight!, has lured a motley assemblage of shockingly shambolic talents into giving their all in the Bard of Avon's silliest play of mistaken identities with a hodge podge of no holds barred casting, race, gender, fatness, skinniness, shortness, tallness, long as you got that drive, personality, sing, dance and perform up a storm, anything goes. Well, believe it or not, it seems like anything but there isn't a bared private, a blue word, and miracle of miracles, you don't even care. "

"Under Jonathan Cerullo's exultant direction and choreography, everybody's in on the joke, everybody's giving 110 percent from the very start, the joke being let's make believe we believe this unbelievable mashup of situations by making it more unbelievably giddy referentially, everybody not only being a guy, everybody also a doll."



A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Syracuse

February 20, 2018 NiteLife Exchange theatre review 0



By BART GREENBERG

"Musicals Tonight! kicked off the spring portion of its 20th Anniversary Season with a joyous and very unexpected production of The Boys from Syracuse. Jonathan Cerullo, director and choreographer, has taken the classic show and decked it out in a style that mixes burlesque, musical comedy and drag. The results are surprisingly delightful!"

"Cerullo's mix of reverence and free-wheeling invention raises the evening to a raucous new level."
