

A Composite Review of “Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella” by Kelsey Morsberger’s Advanced Theater class at Lansdowne High School

*NOTE: The following review was the culmination of a Hippodrome Foundation program conducted at Lansdowne High School by theater critic J. Wynn Rousuck. The purpose of the program was to teach theater students the basics of writing a theater review. Each student was assigned one aspect of the production to focus on: A performance, sets, costumes, songs, etc. The review was compiled by Ms. Rousuck, demonstrating how all of the aspects the students wrote about come together in a single review. The students whose work is included here are:*

Lauren Boyer  
Mackenzie Brinkley  
Collin Chamberlain  
Kayla Cobb  
Kendra Cooper  
Beau Dickerson  
Janai Gilmer  
Imani Jackson  
Kayla Manigault  
Hayley Meszaros  
Lucy Sturgill  
Andrew Tayman  
Dana Thomas  
Tattyanna Wilburn

Performance reviewed: Matinee, Thursday, November 3, 2016

I saw “Cinderella” at the Hippodrome. It’s exciting and unconventional. The plot does a great job of sticking to the original story that we all know and love while adding some twists that keep it interesting! Instead of the plot revolving completely around Cinderella and the Prince, other characters receive their own spotlight. One of the most significant changes is that one of the wicked stepsisters is not so wicked -- not only is she not wicked, she has a love interest!

This stepsister even becomes an ally to Ella. We are also introduced to new characters, including this stepsister’s love interest, Jean-Michel. The audience seemed to respond well to these new characters and they added a wonderful new twist to the classic story.

I was really excited to see Ella. She is portrayed as a well-rounded and strong-willed young woman.

Tatyana Lubov did such an amazing job in this role. My favorite scene was definitely the ballroom scene. Ella's dancing and dialogue with Prince Topher made me fall in love with her character even more. She was perfect. Lubov has amazing intonation, and her movements had so much clarity. Everything about her flowed, from her actions to her beautiful voice.

Everyone knows the classic Brothers Grimm story of Cinderella. The beautiful orphan girl. The cruel step mother. The ugly stepsisters. The dazzling fairy godmother. The charming prince. But there is somewhat of a missing essential part when it comes to previous adaptations of the Prince Charming character. We are so captivated by his looks and heroics that we forget his most essential feature: his personality. A rich personality that goes with his character is on display in Hayden Stanes' portrayal of Prince Topher. This version of "Cinderella" presents Topher as a humorous, lovestruck guy who's more than the two-dimensional princes of the past

Stanes' Topher is a unique interpretation. His ability to take a nearly character-less role and turn it into one with great emotion was surely an inspiration.

Leslie Jackson portrayed the Fairy Godmother in a lively way. She brought more to the character than I have ever seen before.

At first, the Fairy Godmother is known as "Crazy Marie," just the town oddball. Ella is the only one to show her kindness, love, and warmth. Jackson portrayed Marie as a full of life, sassy, and joyous person.

With music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, the classic tale has a few new tricks up its sleeve and a few new songs to its repertoire. This show would not have been as good as it was without the inclusion of extra Rodgers and Hammerstein songs like "Me, Who Am I." The real magic came from the Fairy Godmother and her two songs, "Impossible" and the added song "There's Music in You," which transported the audience into a storybook where no one has worries or cares. There is no show without a great score and a fantastic orchestra neither of which this show lacked.

Anna Louizos designed a magical set for an equally magical musical. The set was very effective in representing Rodgers and Hammerstein's take on the classic tale. When Topher was riding through the forest in the opening of the show, and the trees were moving, it was clear to the audience that he was travelling a far distance. The outside and inside of Cinderella's house were especially detailed and gave an insight to Cinderella's little world. Later on, the ballroom set with a grand

staircase and giant clock, paying homage to the original story, was vibrant and colored with white and gold to show royalty and elegance.

The town scene made you feel like you have entered their story. The colors of the tattered, broken-down houses portrayed that the town was poor and economically struggling.

The costumes were even more spectacular. The exquisite details made the characters pop, down to the peasants in the little village to all the colorful princesses with their dresses at the magical ball.

When Cinderella meets her fairy godmother and becomes a true princess, designer William Ivey Long really made the magical effect come to life. Cinderella was wearing her rags and when she spun around the beautiful dress appeared. The dress was white with a train and the whole dress had sparkles. While the prince was falling in love with her, I was falling in love with her shoes. Her heels were of course the glass slippers. They literally twinkled at sight. They were the eye-catching heels that Cinderella should have.

I would recommend “Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella” because young or old, audience members will enjoy the enchanting retelling of a story as old as time.