

Proctors Theatre, Schenectady, NY

*Mrs. Doubtfire* Book by Karey Kirkpatrick & John O'Farrell, based on the Twentieth Century Studios Motion Picture. Music & Lyrics by Wayne Kirkpatrick & Karey Kirkpatrick

Directed by Jerry Zaks.

Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman

**“Clean it Up/What the Hell!”**

Mrs. Doubtfire was a brilliant comedy film. The Musical is very second rate. BUT watching it is enjoyable; it's just that the show isn't very good; I didn't like it, but I had a good time watching. I laughed a lot. I fell in love with Rob McClure who plays at being the title role, a choice his character makes in order to be close to his children after a bitter divorce. Daniel Hillard is an actor who can't hold a job until he worms his way back into what is now his wife's home to perform the role of nanny and housekeeper. He is good at voices and accents and his female disguise is good enough to fool them all. When he accidentally inspires a TV producer to consider hiring him to host a childrens show the plot thickens immeasurably leading to an outrageous and hysterical scene in a restaurant. The scene was great in the movie with Robin Williams and its just as good in the show with Rob McClure.



Giselle Gutierrez, Cody Braverman, Emerson Mae Chan, Maggie Lakis, Rob McClure;  
Photo: Joan Marcus

Without the exceptional talent of the star, Tony Award nominated for this role, this show might fall flat on its face. His dancing, his exceptional acting and singing, bring a freshness to the part of Daniel. He is the driving force in director Jerry Zaks zany, witty, fast-paced production. His wife, Maggie Lakis, plays his ex-wife in the show and they are a good match. As their three

children, Giselle Gutierrez as Lydia, Cody Braverman as Christopher, and Emerson Mae Chan as Natalie are genuinely engaging.

The rest of the large company are wonderful in their roles. Lannie Rubio as the Flamenco singer is especially good in her number late in the show. Jodi Kimura has terrific moments as TV producer Janet Lundy. Aaron Kaburick and Nik Alexander as Daniel's extended family who affect the man's transformation into a late middle-aged woman from Scotland are absolute perfection playing their parts.

The dances - and there are many of them - have been created by Lorin Latarro. They are a visual spectacle and are truly the heart of the show. McClure is featured in most of them and he delivers a spectacular performance. Zaks has kept the show flying across the stage and there is no breathing space between the moments of the plot. It is as though he realized that keeping his star on the verge of exhaustion was the only way to save the mediocre book and score. Well Jerry Zaks - it worked.

The physical production is excellent. David Korins' scenic design is glorious, from the lavish living space in the Hillard home to the drab apartment Daniel occupies as a divorced man. The costumes, particularly those of Mrs. Doubtfire herself, have been designed by Catherine Zuber who makes a frump glamorous and the glamorous show-biz types even more so. Lighting by Philip S. Rosenberg (who also designed Barrington Stage Company's "Cabaret" this season) was sensitive and brought a beauty to what was often poignant staging. Brian Ronan and Craid Cassidy's sound design work gave us access to every banal lyric and unmelodic note of music in the show.



Rob McClure; Photo: Joan Marcus

Hair and Wig Design, so essential for this show was grandly produced by David Brian Brown.

Kudos to Leo Roberts who played Stuart Dunmire, the ex-Mrs. Hillard's suitor. He did an excellent job being humorously harassed by McClure's Doubtfire.

+ 10/25/2023 +



Leo Roberts, Rob McClure; Photo: Joan Marcus

**Mrs. Doubtfire** plays at Proctors in Schenectady until the end of this week. For information and tickets go to: [ProctorsCollaborative.org](http://ProctorsCollaborative.org)