

Proctors Thjeatre, Schenectady, NY
Some Like It Hot, book by Matthew Lopez and Amber Ruffin
Lyrics by Scott Wittman and Marc Shaiman. Music by Marc Shaiman.
Directed and Choreographed by Casey Nicholaw.
Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman.

“Well, nobody’s perfect.”

“Some Like It Hot” is a complicated and funny musical based on the complicated and funny film created by Billy Wilder for Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon. The musical was a big hit on Broadway last year winning several Tony Awards among which was one for the dances created by Casey Nicholaw. This National Tour edition replicates them beautifully; this alone makes the production something worth seeing. The cast that plays the hilarious cast of characters is simply wonderful and equally worth you audience-time. They aren’t the equals of Lemmon, Curtis and Monroe, and Joe. E Brown of course, but they are delightful performers who pull off the difficult transitions that the plot demands.



Adrianna Hicks and J. Harrison Ghee with the Original Broadway Company of
SOME LIKE IT HOT; Photo: Matthew Murphy

In short, for those who may not know the story, Joe, a womanizing Saxophone player and his friend Jerry, a Bass player, witness a gangland killing in Chicago and are forced to flee for their lives. Disguised as Josephine and Daphne they join an all-girl band, Sweet Sue and her Society Syncopaters, and head for San Diego only to be followed by Spats Columbo, the killer. With minor changes in the book the story and the characters have remained the same. The show is amusing with enough belly laughs to keep you genuinely happy and the score is jumpy, bumpy,



Adrianna Hicks with the Original Broadway Company of *SOME LIKE IT HOT*. Photo: Matthew Murphy

and won't make you grumpy. However what makes the show work so well is the performance of Jerry/Daphne, played by Tavis Kordell, and the dancing which is almost as exhausting to watch as it must be to perform. (There were no photos available of the current cast in production.) Kordell is a tall, handsome man whose height makes Daphne an outrageous and amazing character. She is primarily not effeminate or even feminine, but she is a woman of class and distinction and it is hard not to fall in love with her.

Her equal is the band's singer, Sugar, played here by Leandra Ellis-Gaston, one of the prettiest women on our stage today. She looks divine in the 1933-style clothing, sings with a fine, light voice and acts the loving and the anger Sugar suffers with a flair. Sugar and Daphne become best friends in the show, much as they did in the movie but with very different results. When they are together it is hard to tell who is the more realistic woman, Sugar or Daphne.

Unlike Curtis in the film, Joe, played by Matt Loehr, had to confess his two impersonations to Sugar. Loehr handles the scene well and it turns into his finest moment in the musical. He is a superb tap dancer which aids him through the many numbers in which he performs. He and Kordell together are a brilliant pairing as their differences in height and style add to the comedy of the piece.

The tour's Osgood Fielding the Third is Edward Juvier who isn't as funny as Joe E. Brown but who is a charmer who does funny things. His scenes with Daphne are well done in this production. Tarra Conner Jones played Sweet Sue. It was hard to understand her lyrics.

From the available photos (four of them appear here) the touring production has used the same designs as the Broadway original. Greg Barnes Costumes are truly beautiful. The sets designed by Scott Pask are lovely to look at. The brilliant Natasha Katz has created the lighting design. The thirteen piece orchestra



Kevin Del Aguila; Photo: Mathew Murphy

delivered a fine performance of Shaiman's score conducted by Mark Hinns.



Christiain Borle, Natrasia Yvette Williams, J. Harrison Ghee and members of the original Broadway company; Photo:Matthew Murphy

While certainly not the best show written in the near past - that still belongs to "Something Rotten" - this is one of those very pleasant evenings of music and mirth that certainly deserves your attention. Would I see it again - I would. Should you see it - of course you should, especially if you like good, solid musicals. See it for Nicholaw's wonderful dances, for Kordell's great impersonation of a woman, for Ellis-Gaston's emotional singing. See it for yourself. You won't regret it.

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Some Like It Hot plays at Proctors Theatre in Schenectady through Sunday. If you miss it watch for it to play somewhere else you can get to.

