

Proctors, Schenectady, NY

*Shucked*, Book by Robert Horn. Music and Lyrics by Brandy Clark & Shane McNally.  
Directed by Jack O'Brien. Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman

**“Suddenly the plot, like the whiskey, thickened.”**

A truly funny show is something rare and this one is very well done. More than half of the spoken lines are laugh-lines. The country inflected songs are still very Broadway in their form, but they are the singable type that work so well in their country/western inflections. They each tell a story, as country songs always do, and yet they are plot and character driven like the best of musical theater. They all drive the plot forward much as the spoken lines are show-stoppers.



The cast of “Shucked”; Photo: Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

There are no stars in the cast, only highly talented performers who sing beautifully, act remarkably well, dance with the appropriate gusto and deliver the comic lines with an honesty that tickles your funny-bone and the surrounding body parts, many of which are referred to in the show. There is a lustiness, a romantic sensibility, an expression of greed and a lot of plotting about money, values, love, deception and, of course, corn. To not call the show corny would be wrong, but corny in the best sense. The many jokes are well-worn in their sarcastic humors and every one of them has its deliberate effect. They are, again, corny, but in the best possible sense of the word.

The story of this musical is centered on corn. Something has gone wrong with the soil in



Maya Lagerstam, Tyler Joseph Ellis;  
Photo: Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

Cob County and bride-to-be Maizy, played by Danielle Wade, travels to Tampa in search of a solution to their problem. “Shucked” is her story, start to finish, as the two narrators, Storytellers 1 and 2, tell us. They are played by Maya Lagerstam and Tyler Joseph Ellis. While in Tampa, corn maiden Maizy meets Gordy, a man on the lookout for any easy money scheme played beautifully by handsome Quinn Vanantwerp. As Maizy falls for him she loses concentration on her fiancé, Beau, played by Jake Odmark. His brother, Peanut is portrayed by Mike Nappi. Wade has a lovely singing voice but her

mid-southern accent was hard to hear at times, letting us lose some of the lyrics; Nappi’s east Texas accent is also a bit much on northern ears but I could very easily understand every word he said. Odmark’s verbalizing was definitely deep Georgia. It would seem that Cob County hosts a pastiche of natives. Maizy’s cousin Lulu is performed by the very talented Miki Abraham whose southern accent was more traditional stage southern and allowed her to sing with strength, beauty and understanding. The large chorus and other players were as fine as fine could be.

The show’s design elements are perfect: a somewhat dilapidated barn, rows of drying corn stalks, furniture that might be usable but dilapidated. The set designer is the very visual Scott Pask. The costumes are designed by Tilly Grimes and the lighting was created by Japhy Weideman. Mia Neal created the wigs for the show. Coordinated by the wonderful director Jack O’Brien whose 25 years at the Old Globe in San Diego and his Tony Awards make him an ideal person to propel a pastiche to success. Sarah O’Gleby’s perfect country choreography helps keep the show perky and lively.



Quinn Vanantwerp, Miki Abraham;  
Photo: Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

The five piece orchestra, conducted by Nick Williams sounded much larger in Proctors Theatre, a large, resonant space in which a musical must always feel at home.



Jake Odmark; Photo: Matthew Murphy and  
Evan Zimmerman

“Shucked” sounds as though it will be a hokey, silly show but instead it turns out to be a remarkably charming two and a half hours of light musical theater. The jokes, as well as the songs, carry the show into the realm of something special and it does what so many shows do not do: it returns the word comedy to the honorific “Musical-Comedy” which has almost gotten lost in recent years. It plays into the weekend and is so worth a visit. Don’t let the word “Schenectady” deter you. From southeast Pittsfield,

where I live, the drive is only one hour and fifteen minutes and the parking garage is free.

+ 03/19/2025 +

**SHUCKED** plays at Proctors Theatre, 432 State Street, Schenectady NY through March 23. For information and tickets go to their website at [www.ticketsales.com/proctors-theatre-tickets](http://www.ticketsales.com/proctors-theatre-tickets)

