



FIRST-CLASS, SMOOTH SAILING: Sutton Foster (center) & cast in Roundabout's exquisite revival of the Cole Porter classic musical, *Anything Goes*. Photo: Joan Marcus

Theater Review

Come sail away with *Anything Goes*: First-class revival a razzle-dazzle ride



ANYTHING GOES

Original Book by P. G. Wodehouse, Guy Bolton, Howard Lindsay, & Russell Crouse

New book by Timothy Crouse & John Weidman

Music & lyrics by Cole Porter

Directed & choreographed by Kathleen Marshall

Stephen Sondheim Theatre

124 West 43rd Street

(212-239-6200), www.RoundaboutTheater.org

By David NouNou

Break out the Champagne for the Roundabout's first-class production of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*. It is first-class passage and smooth sailing all the way. As in *The Pajama Game*, director/choreographer Kathleen Marshall has taken a dated musical (originally produced on Broadway in 1934) and spun it into pure theatrical gold. Let's face it: The book creaks, but one does not see this show for its book; all the books of the 1930s musicals creaked, even back then. You see this show to celebrate the genius of Cole Porter and bask in his sumptuous score. For who else can take The Coliseum, The Louvre Museum, Tower of Pisa, Mona Lisa and Mickey Mouse and throw them all into one song to extol another person's fabulousity? Songs such as "You're the Top," the eponymous "Anything Goes," "Blow, Gabriel, Blow," "Friendship," "It's De-lovely," and "Easy To Love" were all chart-topping hits back in the day and are now cherished classics—and jam-packed into one musical.

The plot consists of a transatlantic sailing on the S.S. *American*, with an assortment of zany

characters typical of a 1930s musical: Reno Sweeney, the evangelist-turned-chanteuse (Sutton Foster); Public Enemy Number 13, a/k/a Moonface Martin (the venerable Joel Grey); the millionaire, Elisha Whitney (John McMartin); the stuffy British Lord Evelyn Oakley (Adam Godley); the hero, Billy Crocker (Colin Donnell); the ingénue, Hope Harcourt (Laura Osnes); and her uptight mother, Mrs. Evangeline Harcourt (Jessica Walter). What makes this transoceanic crossing so smooth and memorable is that everything about it is served deluxe, with razzle-dazzle production numbers and endless onstage energy.

Starting with the cast, headed by the enchanting Sutton Foster as Reno; she is a delight from start to finish. Ms. Foster is no threat to Ethel Merman's vocal expertise, but then who could ever be? Ms. Foster has consistently grown with each successive role, starting with *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. She is now one of Broadway's greatest assets, and she fills the stage with her charm, spunkiness, and talent. One might say she has inherited the leading-lady mantle vacated by the late Mary Martin. Luminaries such as the likes of Joel Grey, the ever-reliable John McMartin, Jessica Walter (currently starring in TV Land's "Retired at 35" sitcom), Adam Godley, and Jessica Stone ably support Ms. Foster. They each have their respective moment to shine.

Amongst all the talent mentioned above, there are two standout discoveries. They both can act, sing, and dance quite well indeed. Colin Donnell as Billy Crocker is wonderful. He is a leading man/matinee idol from head to toe; and Laura Osnes as Hope Harcourt is Broadway's new ingénue, lovely and talented. She has inherited the aforementioned mantle vacated by Sutton Foster to pursue loftier, more mature, leading-lady roles. Ms. Osnes started her career rather shakily, having had the dubious distinction of being selected by the American public in an NBC TV reality show. "Grease: You're the One That I Want," to play the part of Sandy in the dreadful, horrific, misconceived revival of Kathleen Marshall's 2007 production of *Grease*. I am pleased to say that both Ms. Marshall and Ms. Osnes have redeemed themselves beautifully.

Visually, the show is a knockout from scene to scene. Derek McLane's handsome set, Martin Pakledinaz's lavish costumes, and dreamy lighting courtesy of Peter Kaczorowski anchor *Anything Goes* beautifully. A visual and aural delight, this exhilarating *Anything Goes* revival is pure pleasure this exhilarating *Anything Goes* revival is pure pleasure per Porter.

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Editor's Note: www.StageZine.com, celebrating our 1-Year Anniversary on the Internet. We want to express our gratitude to all the theater PR professionals, industry organizations, and, most of all, our readers, followers and fans for their continued support and kind words throughout the past year, helping make www.StageZine.com a success.

Broadway Listings

NouNou On Broadway

Broadway Capsule Reviews by David NouNou

MUSICAL REVIVALS



FIRST-CLASS VOYAGE: (l to r) Shina Ann Morris, Joyce Chittick, Colin Donnell, Sutton Foster, Joel Grey, Kimberly Fauré, Jennifer Savelli in outstanding revival of Cole Porter musical, *Anything Goes*. Photo: Joan Marcus



ANYTHING GOES

Kathleen Marshall has again provided the Roundabout with a top-notch musical revival. This time being Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*. Through her impeccable direction and choreography, she has dusted off this creaky musical and given it a gleaming refurbishing. A first-rate cast headed by Sutton Foster, Joel Grey, John McMartin, Jessica Walter, Colin Donnell, and Laura Osnes, they act, sing, and dance their way into our hearts. Beautifully mounted and designed by Derek McLane (sets), Martin Packledinaz (costumes), and Peter Kaczorowski (lighting), they provide first-class passage for this transatlantic sailing. However, the sailing would be meaningless without Cole Porter's magnificent and memorable score. Each song is a delight and done to perfection. I urge my fellow travelers to make their reservations and book passage as soon as possible and do not let this ship sail without you. (Forgive my metaphor; I just couldn't resist. That's how good this show is, theater fans.)

STEPHEN SONDHEIM THEATRE, 124 West 43rd Street, (212-239-6200).

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