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**BACK TO BLUDGEON BROADWAY: (left to right) Marcus Stevens, Natalie Charle Ellis, Jenny Lee Stern & (kneeling) Scott Richard Foster in 'Forbidden Broadway: Alive and Kicking!' Photo: Carol Rosegg**



*Theater Review*

***Forbidden Broadway:  
Alive & Kicking NY's  
hottest shows with  
panache & spot-on satire***

***FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: ALIVE AND KICKING!***

Created & written by Gerard Alessandrini

Directed by Gerard Alessandrini & Phillip George

Musical direction by David Caldwell

Costumes by Philip Heckman

Lighting by Mark T. Simpson

Through January 6, 2013

47th Street Theatre

410 West 42nd Street

(212-279-4200), <http://www.forbiddenbroadway.com>

**By David NouNou**

What a joy and a pleasure to be inside a theater again, just for the sake of having a great time and being able to howl with laughter in recognition of all the interminable Broadway shows one sat through these past few seasons. Welcome back, Gerard Alessandrini, to the Great White Way. Your absence of three years has been felt and we are the richer for your comeback. The flops are not his targets here; that would be way too easy for Mr. Alessandrini. What he goes after are the pompous, overinflated sacred cows, many of whom are deemed the Gods of Broadway. Neither show nor performer this past season is spared. The swipes he takes hit the bulls-eye in practically every vignette.

The vignette I enjoyed the most was at the expense of the oh-so-pretentious, boring musical *Once*. I was vindicated by Mr. Alessandrini's version. Everything I felt that night, he skewered brilliantly in song and humor. I owe you a big one for this, Mr. A. However, the roasting continues with *Newsies*, *Evita*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Anything Goes*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Follies*, *Book of Mormon*, among others.

Recognizing big shows getting their comeuppance and being brought down a peg or three is not enough; celebrities themselves are on the chopping block as well. From Ricky Martin to Matthew Broderick to even Stephen Sondheim in the men's division, their female counterparts include Bernadette Peters, Catherine Zeta Jones, Sutton Foster, and a riotous Audra McDonald. Throw in duos like Mandy and Patti with their loopy, mind-numbing evening; director Diane Paulus, doing her version of *Porgy and Bess*; Judy Garland raised from the dead, criticizing Tracie Bennett for her over-the-top performance in *End of the Rainbow*; capped by Matt Stone and Trey Parker of *Book of Mormon*, and you have a night of convulsive laughter because the impersonations are spot on, making the routines even funnier.

The expert players here are Jenny Lee Stern, Marcus Stevens, Scott Richard Foster, and Natalie Charle Ellis. Their voices are towering, and the performances sublime. Their transformation from one celebrity to the next is magical. At the piano is the expert musician David Caldwell. However, none of this would have been possible without the expertise and the satirical minds of its two geniuses, the spoof specialists who have deftly written and directed this night of hilarity, Gerard Alessandrini and Phillip George. One must also mention the wonderful costumes by Philip Heckman for their instant recognizability of the shows being lampooned.

If you want to have a great time and do not want to spend exorbitant amounts of money, and are willing to see truncated versions of the shows currently on Broadway, do not miss *Forbidden Broadway: Alive & Kicking!* Thank God, it's back, bitchier, and more venomous than ever.

*Edited by Scott Harrah*

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