



DOWN UNDER DELIGHT: Australian stage & screen superstar shines in *Hugh Jackman, Back on Broadway*. Photo: Joan Marcus



Theater Review

Hugh Jackman, Back on Broadway: Song-&-dance man's nonstop razzle-dazzle

HUGH JACKMAN, BACK ON BROADWAY

Music Direction by Patrick Vaccariello

Direction & Choreography by Warren Carlyle

Through January 1, 2012

Broadhurst Theatre

435 West 44th Street

(212-239-6200), www.HughOnBroadway.com

By David NouNou

By tomorrow, the whole city of New York will be reading the hosannas that will be heaped on Hugh Jackman, so let me start it tonight. The man is a dynamo. No shortage of talent here, he can sing, dance, act and make a packed house feel great. He is not playing any character other than himself, and his entire repertoire is done with his Australian accent.

From his first entrance to the stage singing “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning” from *Oklahoma*, the love fest starts, and I am glad to say it never stops. He smoothly transitions to “One Night Only” from *Dreamgirls*. The first act consists mostly of Broadway standards, with a show-stopping anecdote of his first audition at 14 for the musical *The Music Man* and culminating to the Act I breathtaking finale of “My Boy Bill” from *Carousel*.

Who else can pull off a gold lame outfit on the onset of the second act and be as flamboyant as is legally possible, and get away with it? In actuality, it is an homage to his late Aussie mate, Peter Allen, and the Tony award-winning role he played in *The Boy From Oz*, in which he portrayed Mr. Allen, and a beautiful tribute it is. When that set is done, he moves to the razzle-dazzle of Hollywood movies and the iconic stars like Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, along with tap

shoes and songs from *Singin' In The Rain*, *An American In Paris* and *Easter Parade*, followed by a touching tribute to his native Australia, replete with background film, indigenous Australian singers and didgeridoos, with an absolutely mesmerizing rendition of "Over the Rainbow." I'll leave the finale as a surprise treat.

The man should be declared a universal, international treasure, not just in his homeland Down Under, but worldwide. With his charm, charisma, personality and sense of humor, not to mention his enormous talent, this man could possibly be the one who could "bring on world peace." In true Broadway manner, he is total show biz. No glitz, no sets or that many costume changes; the man is talent personified. We could have easily done away with his six chorus girls; they really didn't add anything. They seemed superfluous. When he is onstage, does anything else within 20 yards of him really exist?

Credit must be given to two additional men: Warren Carlyle who provides a brisk tempo and easy choreography to showcase Mr. Jackman at his best; and Patrick Vaccariello, who did the music direction and has fine-tuned the orchestra to best highlight Mr. Jackman's vocal range. In the end, it is the remarkable Mr. Jackman we remember and marvel at his extensive talent that was introduced to us as Wolverine in the hit Hollywood films, and he now is the antipodean song-and-dance master of Broadway. May he never be too far away from the footlights of Broadway, and I promise America will always welcome him back with proverbial open arms.

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