



BROADWAY LEGENDS: (left to right) Mandy Patinkin & Patti LuPone in their new Broadway show.
Photo: Joan Marcus



Theater Review

Patti LuPone & Mandy Patinkin: Uneven 'evening' by two Broadway icons

AN EVENING WITH PATTI LUPONE & MANDY PATINKIN

Directed by Mandy Patinkin

Through January 13, 2012

Ethel Barrymore Theatre

243 West 47th St.

(212-239-6200), <http://www.pattiandmandy.com>

By David NouNou

It is fair to say that Patti LuPone and Mandy Patinkin are theatrical legends. Their voices are musical instruments that are finely tuned. However, once they appear on an almost bare stage (with the exception of some ghost stage lights of various sizes), clad in black and gray, and the orchestra consists of piano (Paul Ford) and bass (John Beal), you begin to realize that this is not going to be a fun fest, but a serious, somber, and sobering evening.

Between Ms. LuPone and Mr. Patinkin together, they have a combined theatrical body of work that leaves a reader breathless, so it comes as an utter surprise (not necessarily a great one) that the song selections for this show are so all over the place, with no cohesion, and so few of them are from shows in which they actually appeared in. Considering they have appeared in such shows as *Evita* together and separately, *Gypsy*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday In The Park With George*, *Anything Goes*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Secret Garden*, and *The Wild Party*, to name a few, the bulk of the songs they sing come from *South Pacific*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and *Carousel*.

Things takeoff with a bang, starting with "Another Hundred People," sung in perfect harmony from Sondheim's *Company* and eventually drifts into songs and monologues from Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific*. Why monologues? Interspersed between the *South Pacific* songs. For some reason, such songs as "Getting Married Today" from *Company* and "Loving You" from *Passion* are inserted, and both are Sondheim tunes. This is odd indeed. From there until the end of Act I, pastiche songs from Jerome Kern's *You Were Never Lovelier* and *Roberta*, Kander and Ebb's *Flora The Red Menace*, Frank Loesser's

Neptune's Daughter and more Sondheim songs from *Into The Woods* and *Anyone Can Whistle*. For the life of me, I could not find a remote thread here. To make matters worse, there is no repartee with the audience, and no setting up of songs or their relevance. I reiterate: serious, somber, and sobering.

Thank God in Act II, song two, *finally* a song from Ms. LuPone's portfolio, "Everything's Coming Up Roses," from *Gypsy*, belted strongly by Ms. LuPone. Mr. Patinkin comes back with vigor in "Buddy's Blues" from *Follies*, complete with the famous Patinkin falsettos, and then to an unimpressive set from Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*. Hallelujah, we finally get to what everyone has been waiting for: the songs from *Evita*. Mr. Patinkin does a brilliant rendition "Oh, What A Circus," and Ms. LuPone does a chilling "Don't Cry From Me Argentina," and needless to say, these two songs bring down the house.

Next, the most bizarre part of the evening takes place. For a closing, a mini version of *Carousel* is performed. LuPone portrays Julie Jordan and Patinkin, playing Billy Bigelow, do actual scenes and songs from Rodger's and Hammerstein's *Carousel*; interspersed between the scenes. They sing "You're A Queer One, Julie Jordan," "If I Loved You," "What's The Use of Wond'rin" and "You'll Never Walk Alone Again." This portion was way too long and self-indulgent. Amazingly, they never share anecdotes about their careers, except the one time that Mr. Patinkin introduces *Evita*, and there we see genuine affection and admiration for each other. I will say it yet again: serious, somber, sobering.

Seeing *Hugh Jackman, Back on Broadway* was like celebrating New Year's Eve, and everyone was having the grandest of times. Seeing Patti LuPone and Mandy Patinkin is like going to the office Christmas party where you expect to have a great time or at least a good time with co-workers/friends, but the only people who show up are the CEO, top brass of the company, and you.

Edited by Scott Harrah

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