

BROS Theatre Company

ANYTHING GOES • MAY 1998 • MINACK THEATRE

REVIEW • THE CORNISHMAN

The SS American is sailing all this week from the good old US of A to the UK in the classic Cole Porter musical Anything Goes, presented by the Barnes & Richmond Operatic Society.

With director Andrew MacBean at its helm, the ship may be slow leaving New York, indeed, the long haul of the first act suggests a world cruise rather than an Atlantic crossing, but when she gets up steam she races towards the coast of England as eagerly as the ill-fated Titanic towards the iceberg.

However, while she is also short of lifeboats and carries only a couple of lifebelts, there is no need to entertain even a hint of a sinking feeling.

As one of its passengers so rightly says, "Go Hail a few Marys" - the SS American really is unsinkable and, with siren blowing and all hands singing and dancing, steams to a record-breaking success.

Cap'n MacBean, with the help of his first officers Katy Hart (choreographer), Wesley Henderson Roe (set design and construction) and Viv "Take it Home, Maestro" Vignoles, gets all the fun possible from an impossible book. There may be corn on the ship's menu, but they're cooking with gas in the galley.

And then, of course, there are the songs, acclaimed as "some of the best ever heard on Broadway", from the show's title tune to I Get a Kick out of You, they are Cole Porter at his best.

The ship's crew, passengers and band, handle them well - the extended tap routine at the end of the first act is something else - with sparkling performances, in particular, from leading lights Lizzie Brignall (the sinner-saving, sensuous sermonising Reno), Paul St James (the broken-down broker) Billy, alias Snake-Eyes Johnson), Jan Croxson (the hopeful debutante Hope), Hamilton Faber (the extremely English aristocrat with a gypsy in his lineage), and Matthew Chandler as the gangster Moon-Face Martin, who has to live with the fact that he is only Number 13 in the Public Enemy ratings, and whose rendering of Friendship with Lizzie Brignall all but stops the show.

A final pat for Colin Yorath (Cheekey, the long-haired, Long Island, good tempered dog) who helps make the show, as the song says, De-Lovely, De-Lightful, De-Licious, De-Lectable, De-Lirious.

Go see it, and Bon Voyage.

Frank Ruhrmund