

Review: Crazy For You ***



Crazy for You, the George Gershwin musical, landed in Edinburgh this week with a breathless performance high on energy and relentless pace.

The plot – New York banker Bobby Child being sent to the outback that is Deadrock, Nevada to close its dilapidated theatre but falling in love with local lass Polly – is rather a flimsy one. But the Edinburgh audience, in common one suspects with the rest of the paying public throughout the musical's UK tour, didn't come for a convoluted plot. They came for the big Gershwin numbers and, in this respect, they weren't disappointed.

Bobby Child is played by Tom Chambers, star of countless theatre productions as well as several television and film appearances. In a bid to impress Polly – played by the star of the show for me, Charlotte Wakefield – Child pretends to be theatre promoter Bela Zangler. But the real Bela Zangler is played by Neil Ditt and there is a very clever scene early in the second half when Child and Zangler are together, dressed identically and humourously believing to be each other. It is a polished performance from both Chambers and Ditt which went down well with the Edinburgh audience.

There's plenty of comedy in the show although my feeling is it tried too hard in places to be funny and some of the punchlines were a tad predictable. I couldn't help but feel some of the audience laughed because they felt they had to. The main perpetrator in this respect was Claire Sweeney, as Irene Roth. Sweeney, another star of stage and television – she's still remembered by many soap fans as Lindsay Corkhill in Channel 4's *Brookside* – didn't have as big a part in this show as I expected but her penchant for delivering an obvious punchline and waiting for the audience to chortle accordingly perhaps didn't quite meet expectations.

Charlotte Wakefield as Polly, on the other hand, has a presence which dominates the show and her performance was excellent. On this performance it's easy to see why she was nominated for an Olivier Award for best actress in the West End production of *Spring Awakening*.

Child tries to win Polly's affections by trying to arrange a big musical show for the Deadrock theatre and the chemistry between the pair worked well.

The songs, of course, are the real stars of the show. Starting with *K-ra-zy For You* there is a plethora of toe-tapping tunes and poignant melodies. *Things Are Looking Up*, *Someone to Watch Over Me* and the fantastic *I Got Rhythm* are the highlights of the first half while *They Can't Take That Away From Me* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* along with the rousing finale light up the second period.

I wouldn't say I was 'crazy' for *Crazy For You* but it's still an enjoyable couple of hours – and if you're a fan of George Gershwin you'll love it.

Crazy For You is on at the Edinburgh Playhouse until Saturday 7th April. Tickets [here](#).

Edinburgh Reporter rating: ***