

Out and about in Edinburgh – Rock of Ages and Singin' in the Rain – reviews

Rock of Ages, Playhouse

Sweet Child O'Mine by Guns N' Roses plays out as the Edinburgh audience takes their seats. It's an important reference point as this jukebox musical is set in same year that the band released their debut classic Appetite For Destruction (1987). We are transported back to the Sunset Strip and the scuzzy L.A rock scene. Hair metal often gets a bad rap but the scene did produce the much punkier Guns N' Roses. Kevin Kennedy, who famously played Curly Watts in Coronation Street for 20 years from 1983 to 2003 was once in a band with two members of The Smiths, keeps his rock n' roll credentials in check as club owner Denis Dupree along with his side-kick Lonny played by glam rock fan Joe Gash. A double bill of Twisted Sister's I Wanna Rock and We're Not Gonna Take It accompanies the pair's resistance to the gentrification of West Hollywood.

A portrait of Ronald Reagan and his economic policy looms large over the characters. Sam Turrell as Drew and Gabriella Williams as Sherry provide the love interest, while Matt Terry as Stacey Jaxx needs to summon his inner Axl Rose to bring some edge to his rock front-man. Erin Bell is excellent as 80s rock chick Constance but the role could be broadened out, as one of the most significant characters in the film something is lost. The humour is at times ridiculous bordering on Carry On film territory but the sleazy, cheeseball rock of the era gives an everything a much needed extra lift when needed.



Singin' In The Rain, Festival Theatre

There was a broad sweep of Edinburgh's demographic with fans of the Hollywood classic starring Gene Kelly in abundance. It's a show that translates wonderfully to the stage. Faye Tozer as Lina Lamont brings a wonderfully comic performance as does Sandra Dickinson as Dora Bailey and the dialect coach. The American-British actress has an impressive C.V from cult T.V series *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* (1981) to recent *The Batman* (2022) feature film. Sam Lips as Don Lockwood delivers a stunning *Singin' In The Rain*, it is of course impossible not to think of Gene Kelly in one of the greatest movies of all time but Lips brings it to life joyously dancing, jumping and splashing across the stage.

There's palpable stage chemistry between Lips and Charlotte Gooch (Kathy Selden) the pair glide across the stage as

naturally as drawing breath.