



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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WE WILL ROCK YOU

Arts Theatre

Matt Byrne Media

Until 28 July

Review by Doug Phillips

They threatened to rock us, and they were true to their word.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that non-Queen fans wouldn't find this show to be to their liking (no risk here). But if you don't enjoy this production, it's got nothing to do with Queen. This is a great rock musical and MBM have put together a fantastic version of it.

We should address the obvious issue first up though. Iman Saleh's voice just wasn't up to it. But let's be fair here, he is asked to sing the songs of someone who is often considered to be the greatest rock voice of all time, with a range beyond incredible. That alone makes it a tall order. And with the rehearsals leading up to opening night, I wouldn't be surprised if his restrictions were simply a case of overuse.

When Iman did get it right, you could see why he was picked for this role. I'd seriously encourage anyone who saw the show tonight and thinks he can't do it to buy a ticket to the Shedley season and find out.

Someone who had no voice problems at all was Danielle Greaves. In fact, I think she's got even more in her artillery that she didn't unleash on opening night. Her voice was rockin'. And I loved her portrayal of Scaramouche too. Even the slight shades of Jack Sparrow didn't detract from her great performance. Spot on humour and comedic timing means she is either a natural, or excellently directed.

Anthony Butler is the audience favourite though. And why not! He completely owned the role of Brit. With Kathryn Driver as Oz at his side they owned their scenes, and came close to stealing others'.

I wasn't sure about April Stuart as Killer Queen. She suited the role in every way, and gave a great performance, but I just think her voice was a little too 'theatre' and not enough 'ROCK'.

Khashoggi, played by James McCluskey-Garcia was a treat though. With a voice suited perfectly to the role of the authoritarian enforcer, he came over as an evil Rufus (apologies if you weren't a Bill & Ted fan, you're not going to get the Rufus reference).

And much respect to the ensemble. It's impossible not to be jealous of these players, as it was easy to see that they were absolutely loving it.

The band? Well, they were hot. But they'd wanna to be wouldn't they? There's big expectations on a band playing this material, but they handled it great. The rock was rockin', and the beauty in Queen's quieter music was spot on. Patrick Maher's cameo on stage for the finalé was a nice touch. With the band belting out Mercury's lyrics, and the band rocking out, all while we got to watch a lead guitarist rip it up too, all made for a great finish.

The sets weren't massive or full-on, but they did their job extremely well. Excellent use of lighting, effects and screens gave the performance all the atmosphere it needed.



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Well done to Matt Byrne and his team. There were a few minor glitches and 'moments', but it was an opening night that blew the socks off everyone and is a sign of a great season to come.