



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## FORBIDDEN BROADWAY

### Blackwood Players

Blackwood Memorial Hall

Until 15 August 2015

Review by Luke Wagner

Any fan of musical theatre will stand proudly and tell of the wonder that is Broadway and the iconic, spectacular and vibrant way that theatre is brought to life through song, dance and acting. Any non-fan is more likely to enjoy Blackwood Players tongue-in-cheek look at some of the big names of Broadway and their most iconic shows.

Presented in a revue style, this production doesn't hold back as it takes on classics like Les Mis, "Wicked", "Cats", "Fiddler on the Roof", "The Phantom of the Opera" and many more. More an open mic night for audience complaints, there were songs about lengthy acts, wordy dialogue, people playing animals and over singing. The remainder of the show was a series of impersonations of some big name stars like Barbara Streisand and Liza Minelli, followed by some odd choices like Carol Channing in "Hello Dolly" and Ethel Merman teaching the Phantom of the Opera to sing.

The hook for this production was its parodies of the classics and cleverly changed lyrics. Unfortunately, this didn't come across strongly enough due to some gaps in the production. The sound levels meant that the pianist was set much louder than the vocalists, and then when they were audible, quite often the lyrics were not articulated as some struggled to articulate whilst keeping tempo. These elements need to be just right to allow the audience to really absorb the comedy from these songs.

In the group numbers choreography was a little sloppy and needed some tightening up, but the group vocals made up for this. The Les Mis section of the show was a highlight with a rousing ensemble parody of "Do You Hear the People Sing".

A show with a structure such as this provides an opportunity to showcase a broader range of talent, whilst giving new and younger performers a chance to shine. Whilst all the Blackwood regulars featured heavily, it was great to see some new faces such as Bradley West and Keira Turner shine. Very special mention must go to pianist Sarah Klein for her highly skilled performance.

Funny men James Barbary and George Bannard didn't fail to bring their comedy styling to the show and helped to structure the show. Lauren Bannard as Liza Minelli got the energy a little too high as we couldn't understand her. Tiffany Barbary stole the show as she showed off her powerful vocal range when she performed a parody of Wicked's iconic ballad called "Defying Subtlety". Ms Barbary is a standout throughout the evening and her energy is the benchmark needed for all cast members to make a show like this a success.

Blackwood has created a production that pokes fun at the very essence of what we do in theatre and have done so in a way that audiences can relate to. With a few technical tweaks and some tightening up of the cast, this show will be sure to captivate.