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## REVIEW: 'CRAZY FOR YOU' AT RIVERSIDE THEATRE

January 16, 2015 / reviews, Riverside Theatre /

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*Photo of Riverside Theatre's "Crazy for You" by Benjamin Hager.*

By PAM HARBAUGH

The wild joy of terrific Tony Award winning choreography and big production numbers will leave you beaming at Riverside Theatre's thoroughly entertaining, professional production of "Crazy for You."

This delightful musical, called the "New Gershwin Musical," is a retelling of the 1930 musical "Girl Crazy." Its book by contemporary comedic playwright Ken Ludwig opens the story in New York City's theater district. There, we meet wannabe Broadway hooper named Bobby Child who wants to dance for impresario Bela Zangler but instead is sent by his wealthy mother (Eve Plumb, "Jan" on TV's "The Brady Bunch") to close down a theater in the tumbleweed town of Deadrock, Nev. Bobby meets Polly and love blooms.

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So does a whole lot of dance numbers originally choreographed by Susan Stroman and restaged here by choreographer Deanna Dys. This is simply exceptional work and so thrilling that it steals the show. In fact, you will find yourself during the slower moments panting for more dancing. It revs up with the brilliant “I Can’t Be Bothered Now” in which Bobby is joined by a bevy of cotton candy pink clad chorus line who sweeten up the stage with...well...adorable dancing. Then there’s the ingenious “Slap that Bass” in which the chorus line are used like bass violins. This is typical Stroman magic — using multiple levels and incorporating hand props into frothy, inventive work — and what earned her the 1992 Tony Award for “Crazy for You.”



But...also stealing the show is Drew Nellesen who is sensational as Bobby Child. He sings, he dances, he exudes stage charm and churns up the chemistry with perky Polly. Playing Polly is sweet-voiced, nimble footed Abby Church who delivers a beautiful “Someone to Watch Over Me.”

James Beaman, who recently appeared as Thenardier in Orlando Shakespeare Theatre’s “Les Miserables,” brings out the funny in Bela Zangler. Stacey Harris turns up the heat in her vampy

dance number “Naughty Baby” in which she seduces saloon owner played by Tony Lawson.

James Brennan directs this effervescent production. Great gags, especially the “mirror image” scene in the second act when Bobby, who has taken on the persona of Zangler, meets the real deal in a drunken daze. Mr. Brennan, who has shown his dramatic talent with Riverside’s “Miss Saigon” and his comic ability with the theater’s “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum,” turns in some very funny slapstick routine with a saloon fight which brings in deserved applause.

Music director Ken Clifton does his best work yet in “Crazy for You” — numbers like Embraceable You,” “Nice Work if You Can Get It” and “I Got Rhythm” sparkle with Broadway quality. Scenic designer Michael Anania creates a funny comic setting, especially for Deadrock’s saloon which grows and grows and grows as it’s brought on stage. And costume designer Kurt Alger has amassed a sweet array of looks for the cast.

This show is fun, fun fun. If you’ve never seen “Crazy for You,” this will be a good introduction to it. It’s got verve, style and yes, it’s “got rhythm....who could ask for anything more?”

**SIDE O’ GRITS:** “Crazy for You” runs through Feb. 1 at Riverside Theatre, 3250 Riverside Park Drive, Vero Beach. Performances are held Tuesdays through Sundays. Tickets start at \$35. Call 772-231-6990 or visit [www.RiversideTheatre.com](http://www.RiversideTheatre.com).

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