



# Theatre Review

By Neda Heeter

## "Crazy For You" is a amazing!

Although it's hard for me to pick just one show, "Crazy For You" might be my all time favorite at Riverside Theatre.

It has all the elements of a great show: fantastic music, great high-energy dance numbers (including incredible tap numbers), slapstick comedy performed by talented actors, amazing choreography, beautiful sets and fabulous costuming. And, the George & Ira Gershwin musical comedy is artfully directed by James Brennan.

The plot revolves around Bobby Child, (played by Drew Nellessen) the rich son of a banking family. Bobby isn't interested in the family business. He dreams of singing and dancing on Broadway. His domineering Mom, (Eve Plum) gives him an ultimatum. Bobby can either marry his long-time, overbearing, anxious fiancée (Stacey Harris) or go to Deadrock, Nevada and foreclose on the town's defunct theatre. Bobby chooses to go to Deadrock where he falls in love with the theatre owner's daughter (Abby Church) and hatches a plan to save the theater. The plot is full of twists and turns, hilarious comedic episodes, fantastic music and amazing dancing.

Space does not allow mention of every enjoyable moment of the show. There are too many to mention, but I will highlight just a few.

Mr. Nellessen is perfectly cast in his role as Bobby Childs. In addition to being a phenomenal dancer with amazing grace, he has mastered the art of physical comedy to perfection.

Not to be missed is the scene with Bobby (Drew Nellessen) and Bela (James Beaman) in the saloon. It was truly outstanding. It was humorous, touching and poignant all at the same time.

Ms. Church's rendition of "Someone To Watch Over Me" was moving. Her portrayal of Polly throughout the show was funny, delightful, joyful and touching.

The entire production was flawless. With so many excellent numbers, it's hard to pick any to highlight but the one that immediately comes to mind is "I've Got Rhythm" which closes out the first act and features Nelleseen, Church and the entire ensemble. It keeps building and building and is really phenomenal.

James Brennan's direction was superb – nuanced, comical, touching, and full of an endless stream of energy. The choreography by Deanna Dys rivals any that I've seen on Broadway and is truly remarkable. What is amazing is that the cast only rehearsed for approximately two weeks prior to opening night, which speaks to the talent in the cast. The choreography showcases the talents of the cast perfectly and includes beautifully executed tap dances, which is rarely seen anymore.

I would be remiss if I didn't comment on the impeccable period costuming or the beautiful sets that grace this production. The sets are original sets built in-house by Riverside Theatre staff for this performance.

The performance also featured James Beaman (Bela Zangler), John O'Creagh (Everett Baker), Tony Lawson (Lank Hawkins), Eve Plumb (Mother), Marcus Stevens (Eugene Fodor), Joanie Brittingham (Patricia Fodor), and Karen Hyland (Tess). The ensemble is comprised of: Michael Biren, Molly Jean Blodgett, Courtney Brady, Lauren Defilippo, Elise Dwenger, Sarah Fagan, Jerry Gallagher, Natalia Lepore Hagan, Andrew Hubacher, Beverly Jensen, Devin Johnson, Ben Laxton, Ben Liebert, Michael McGurk, Rob Reynolds, and Darius Wright. The talented orchestra led by Ken Clifton (Music Director).

"Crazy For You" performs January 13 – February 1, 2015 on the Stark Stage at Riverside Theatre. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Box Office at 772-231-6990 or online at [www.riversidetheatre.com](http://www.riversidetheatre.com).