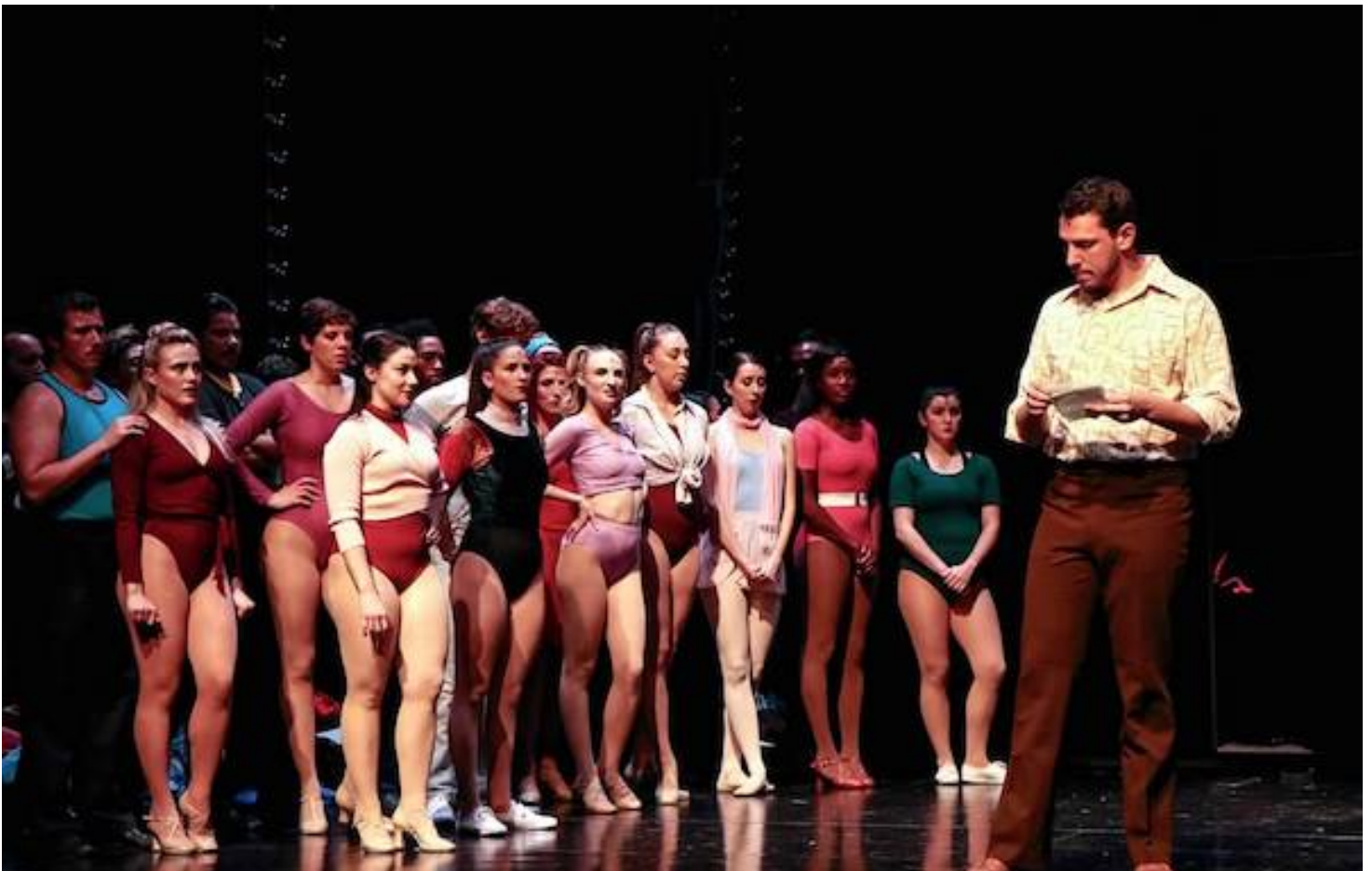


Metropolis Performing Arts presents A CHORUS LINE Review— Engaging Classic Musical Staged Circa Now

Posted on September 26, 2018 by [Amy Munice](#)



When Paul (played by Luke Halpern) breaks down after sharing his tortured story of being abused by homophobes, Zach, the casting director (played by Brian Kulaga), who has so far been anything but sensitive, throws his arm around Paul to comfort him. That's when the suburban preview audience at Arlington Heights' Metropolis Performing Arts Center erupted in spontaneous loud applause and shout outs of approval.

How fascinating! Did audiences in the years of *Chorus Line's* long 9 Tony Award spanning Broadway run have similar gut reactions—or is this a welcomed sign that we have indeed come a long way??



That was just one indication among many that this once long-running Broadway musical has aged well, and fits into our time as easily as before. It is, after all, a love letter to all the young people who put their all into show biz—as they do now and did before—often with little return and much disappointment along the way.



We first meet the chorus line – or rather, applicants for the job of making it beyond the audition to get into the big show—as they are drilling, drilling, and drilling their dance routines again and again. Zach is their martinet task master, who then puts them one after the other on the spot, prying into their personal stories well beyond what would now be



legally acceptable for any HR interview.

Metropolis Performing Arts Casting is Superb

It is then that the personalities in the ensemble truly emerge, reminding us why Casting Director Robin M. Hughes seemed to have gone on the search for the most fresh-faced triple threats to be found in Chicagoland. Filled with pathos and humor, the book by James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante with musical lyrics by Edward Kleban quickly paints mini-portraits of the two dozen chorus line wannabees. Many of their stories also remind, beyond show biz, why most of us who are older than 30 would never want to be a twenty-something again.





But in this production--at least for this reviewer --it's the raw talent too that helps burn these small cameo portraits into your heart. They all danced, but it was hard not to especially notice that Ivory Leonard IV has an ability to *fly* across the stage with grace that reminds of Fred Astaire in the oldie movies.

And, they all sang, but when three of the young women (Kara Schoenhofer, Sara Haverty and Laura Sportiello) sing reminiscences about their early love for ballet, it is especially sating.

But like any chorus line, it's all about the ensemble work, and here it is the choreography by Christie Kerr and the tight direction by Robin M. Hughes and Music Direction by Kenneth McMullen that keeps your spirits liting and the audience breaking out into spontaneous claps of appreciation. For this reviewer, the way in which they and their cast's talents kept us engaged is especially noteworthy because the score per se is relatively ho hum, as Broadway blockbusters go.

This is a fun musical, delivered with TLC in a comfortable and comforting theater venue, and a top pick for anyone who wants to check an important production off their Broadway history dance card.

RECOMMENDED

Note: This is now added to the Picture this Post round up of BEST PLAYS IN CHICAGO, where it will remain until the end of the run. Click here to read — [Top Picks for Theater in Chicago NOW – Chicago Plays](#) **PICTURE THIS POST Loves.**

Book by James Kirkwood & Nicholas Dante, Music by Marvin Hamlisch, and Lyrics by Edward Kleban. Directed by Robin M. Hughes, Choreographed by Christie Kerr, Music Directed by Kenneth McMullen. Designers are Marc Beth (*Sound Designer*), Shane Cinal (*Properties Designer*), Rachel S. Parent (*Costume Designer*), Christopher Rhoton (*Scenic Designer*), Kerry Strahm (*Technical Director*), and Michael Wagner (*Lighting Designer*). Metropolis Executive/Artistic Director is Joe Keefe. Metropolis Production Manager is William A. Franz, Assistant Production Manager is Sarah Elizabeth Buto.

CAST: Jordan Beyeler (*Kristine*), Chih-Jou Cheng (*Connie*), Lars Ebsworth (*Butch*), Sabrina Edwards (*Edy*), Madelyne Forrester (*Tricia*), Joshua A. Peterson (*Frank*), Hannah Griffith (*Vicki*), Luke Halpern (*Paul*), Dan Hamman (*Al*), Sara Haverty (*Bebe*), Daniel Hurst (*Mike*), Joseph Kuchey (*Greg*), Brian Kulaga (*Zach*), Ivory Leonard IV (*Richie*), Ben F. Locke (*Mark*), Conor McGarry (*Tom*), Jessica Miret (*Diana*), Mollyanne Nunn (*Val*), Casiena Raether (*Cassie*), Kara Schoenhofer (*Shelia*), Nick Schrier (*Larry*), Lance Spencer (*Bobby*), Laura Sportiello (*Maggie*), Thomas E. Squires (*Roy*), Kaleb Van Rijswijck (*Don*), and Amanda Zgonina (*Lois*).

When:

Thru November 3, 2018

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays 7:30 PM
Saturday and Sunday matinees 3:00 PM

Where:

Metropolis Performing Arts
111 West Campbell Street
Arlington Heights, Illinois

For more information about Metropolis visit the [Metropolis Arts website](#).

Note: Picture This Post reviews are excerpted by [Theatre in Chicago](#)



Amy Munice

About the Author:

Amy Munice is Editor-in-Chief and Co-Publisher of Picture This Post. She covers books, dance, film, theater, music, museums and travel. Prior to founding Picture This Post, Amy was a freelance writer and global PR specialist for decades—writing and ghostwriting thousands of articles and promotional communications on a wide range of technical and not-so-technical topics.

Amy hopes the magazine’s click-a-picture-to-read-a-vivid-account format will nourish those ever hunting for under-discovered cultural treasures. She especially loves writing articles about travel finds, showcasing works by cultural warriors of a progressive bent, and shining a light on bold, creative strokes by fledgling artists in all genres.

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