

BWW Review: THE 39 STEPS at CC Amstel - a delirious fun ride!



Take 39 quick steps to get tickets fast! It's a hoot!

by Chantal Kunst Nov. 25, 2021

The 39 steps, a film based on the book by **John Buchan**, made famous by director **Alfred Hitchcock**.

This stage version brings a crazy mixture of an espionage story, meets whodunnit, meets comedy. And not in the least, a gorgeous linguistic piece of theatre. Brought to the audience by the members of Queen's English Theatre Company (QETC) based in Amsterdam, it's a brilliant piece of work.



Firstly, it's honestly a whirlwind of perfect British, mixed with an endless amount of accents, such as Scottish, Irish, Glaswegian and Cockney, to name a few. It's a joy to listen to. As smoothly as the actors change accents, the same goes for the huge amount of characters they play. Without blinking they're in and out of character.

What a delightful show. Only 4 actors, a dozen different characters and bundle of sheer fun. Alex Baggett as leading man **Richard Hannay** is comedy perfection. Not only is his comedic timing,

physical comedy and delivery of the Queen's English bloody brilliant, his facial expressions are to die for. His partner in crime Daniela Down (as Annabella/Pamela/Margaret) is the queen of comedy come to life. Her physical comedy is continuous, and she brings a dry wittiness to her character which is just amazing. Mark Winstanley and Charlie Bird as "Clown 1 & 2" portray all 'supporting' roles, if we can actually call them that. Effortlessly and with so much tangible joy to be on stage, they help the story along... as police officers, as a married couple who own an Scottish Inn and many many more.

This show is a total adventure. Funny, intelligent, hysterical but never over the top. What a thrill!

For more info and tickets:

www.Qetc.nl

Photo credits: Chris Goeken

ARTS TALK MAGAZINE

THE 39 STEPS at Amsterdam's CC Amstel Theater



An evening at the CC Amstel this weekend promises a plethora of surprises with *The 39 Steps* an hilarious comedy of errors which is an adaptation, by Patrick Barlow, of Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 classic British thriller. With the ridiculous and the colorful humour delivered in slick transitions and ease of delivery, this play further acts to highlight the professionalism of the cast and crew, which we have come to expect

from The Queen's English Theatre Company. What is not to love about this slapstick comedy?

Its opening, a game show, descends into chaos at the shot of a gun fired by a mysterious *femme fatale*. Quick fire jokes drive us directly into the next scene, where a dash of old-fashioned romance and old-fashioned manners lead, unexpectedly, to a murder. And that's all within the first five minutes. We then follow the adventures of a suave English gent, who traverses trains, dodges bullets and ducks dodgy deals only complicated further by an entourage of damsels in distress.

The cast of four, playing 140 characters – who have been described as 'top-drawer' – really know their stuff; they each play a vital role in the story telling and are all equally hilarious. Engaging and highly entertaining performances from Mark Winstanley and Charlie Bird, the two foolish police men-come-kilted Scottish hoteliers-come-secret agents, as they reinvent themselves in front of the audiences' eyes. It's a stand out show from Daniella Down, the glamorous female in the mix, who is as important as the olive in a martini, as she shakes up each scene much to the audience's delight. Finally, Alex Baggett as Richard Hannay, our gentleman on the run, gave a brilliant and passionate performance; the acting was simply charming dear fellow!

Throughout the play, there is a deliberate, comical interplay between the stage and the sound desk. It caught the audience many times by surprise and triggered moments of raucous laughter and spontaneous applause: echoing the machine gunners in the brilliant plane police chase scene. Together, the cast and crew – as it really is a whole team effort – managed to balance face-paced comedy moments and sentimental tones wonderfully.

A most unexpected but first-rate addition to the storytelling was the use of shadow puppetry. The illumination enabled the cast to bring to life other-wise impossible police chases across the Scottish highlands and through the air, amongst many more memorable moments. Creative use of props complemented the tongue-in-cheek quality of this performance, appealing to the child in us all.

It's a top recommendation from me! While there are still tickets left for this weekend, make your way with all the family to this delightful show. *The 39 Steps* is directed by Mark Winstanley.

Rosie Fawbert Mills 26th November 2021

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A talented and energetic team of four create a huge cast of loony characters on this whirlwind ride through old-fashioned slapstick. There are accents, wigs and props aplenty, alongside endless clever production touches that make the play a feast for the eyes.