



STAGERAGE

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Kinky Boots

Well, the curtain has come down on our production of *Kinky Boots*. A huge thank you to those people who gave their time and energy to make this production the success it was and a great time was had by all. For those of you who may have missed out on this fabulous show, we have included some photos taken during this production, along with the reviews that were published.



These boots be made for loving and that's just what you'll do

Review by Richard Mays
8 September 2024

Ah truly, there's no business quite like shoe business. Feel-good and foot-stomping *Kinky Boots* in the Regent on Broadway kicks considerable butt with its free-flowing exuberance and energy. On opening night, the show also eventually managed to coax a standing ovation from large portions of a notoriously difficult-to-impress Palmy audience. That's just one of the achievements this production is entitled to chalk up.

As interpreted by 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun' chum Cyndi Lauper, the musical tells how a foundering, down-at-heel (ahem) Northampton, England shoe factory attained a market 're-boot'. Based on a true story, Lauper and her confederates also manage to put a new spin on a couple of tales by the Brothers Grimm, mashing together elements of *The Elves and the Shoemaker* and *Cinderella*.

A multi award-winning musical, *Kinky Boots* became a stage hit early last decade, so it's impressive to see it in full riot on stage here so soon. And as a prelude to October's Palmy Drag Fest, its season couldn't be more timely.

When against his wishes and better judgement Charlie Price becomes responsible for restoring the fortunes of a failing family footwear firm, his attempts to defend a woman from a London street mugging is serendipitous. The 'woman' is none other than Lola, a savvy drag-queen cabaret diva who, it just so happens, has problems finding flashy but durable high-heeled boots. Charlie takes Lola back to Northampton to design a rescue range of sexy thigh-high show-biz heels in time for the Milan Fashion Show. Let's just say that this course of vocational true love doesn't run smooth. The show explores the ups and many downs of this relationship, as well as the reactions of Charlie's job-threatened working-class factory 'elves', and also from Nicola – his ambitious go-getter girlfriend. Turns out, Charlie and Lola have more in common than they realise – both are resisting the demands and expectations of their pushy fathers.

Now in any Cinderella story, there has to be a fairy godmother, and the magic here comes from company professional Paul Fagamalo as Lola – aka "Simon from Clacton". "Braggaty cissy boy" Lola, the trained son of a prize-fighter, has carved out a successful niche in the world of drag entertainment. Channelling an inner Tina Turner, Fagamalo is not only a master of the 'flam and glam' with all the poise, moves and a 'rockaria' vocal range, but can also pull his character's personality right back, showing sensitivity and humility. This is especially apparent during Lola's efforts to fit in with the northern factory crowd by dressing down and acting 'normal'. There's also the heartfelt and affecting 'Hold Me in Your Heart' that Lola performs at his dying father's rest home. Throughout, Fagamalo not only sets a high performance standard but shows plenty of generosity towards his fellow community cast members. Local, Lindsay Yeo continues to make great progress in musical theatre. Complementing Lola, the role of strait-laced Charlie – 'Prince' and heir to the Price family shoebox – fits Yeo like a well-made pair of brogues. He portrays the temperamental, self-doubting and career-choice conflicted 'Mr Price' with a well-pitched vocal dexterity and intensity, accompanied by convincing angst.

Kinky Boots has plenty of roles for established and emerging local talents. Among those making the most of this opportunity are Tamzin Price as a winsome Lauren, Keiran Murphy's folksong singing Harry, a pugnacious Jayden Colban as Don, Erica Ward's stropky Trish, Milana Mariu-Reade as an emotionally manipulating Nicola and the colourful bevy of Lola's 'transgentry' Angels.

Kinky Boots is a show with heart and (dare I say it) soles, humanity, and humour. Auckland and Waikato-based director Richard Neame and his production team underpin this entertaining frolic with sound performance values, slick scene changes and lighting cues, and plenty of pace. Backed by a tight and tuneful 11-piece band, *Kinky Boots* has all the grooves and the moves, the coifs and the cossies, the appeal and warmth to welcome in spring with a high-stepping froufrou fling.

Go along, have fun and dare to let these kinky boots 'walk all over you'. These boots be made for loving and that's just what you'll do.



WE NEED YOU!

ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS

HE WHĀNAU TUATINITINI

MTNZ CONFERENCE 2025

We are looking for a team of people to help host the Musical Theatre NZ Annual Training and Conference Weekend in 2025. This coincides with our 125th Anniversary as a society!

This is going to be loads of fun and a great opportunity to network with theatre societies from around NZ.

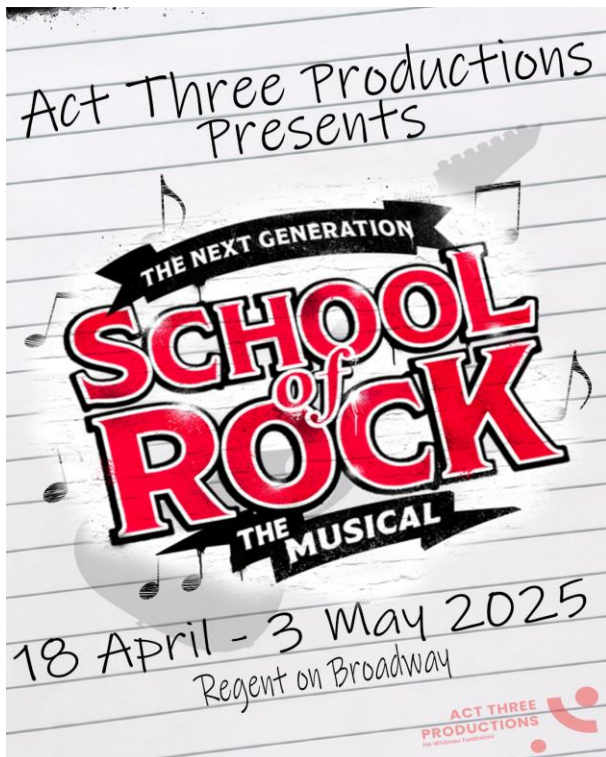
If you're keen to learn more - email lorna@actthree.co.nz



Please note in your diaries that the ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS Annual General Meeting will be held next year on Monday, 24 March 2025.



UPCOMING EVENTS



School of Rock is a high-energy, feel-good show that brings the iconic movie to life on stage! Follow Dewey Finn, a wannabe rock star, as he transforms a class of straight-A students into a mind-blowing rock band. Perfect for all ages, it's pure rock 'n' roll magic!



COME FROM AWAY is a heartwarming musical based on true events, showcasing the kindness of a small town that welcomed stranded passengers during 9/11. With uplifting songs and powerful storytelling, it celebrates human connection, resilience, and the spirit of community in the face of adversity. Don't miss it!



Supporting characters that are better than the leads

Tanyel Gumushan

The show just wouldn't be the same without them! Everybody dreams of playing the lead. It's sometimes even the title role. But quite often, those leading characters make some questionable choices, and we see every side of them; the good, the bad, and the ugly. That's where supporting characters come in. They're there to guide our protagonist (or antagonist) and offer a different perspective or some comic relief. As a result, we sometimes prefer our supporting characters to the lead. And that's completely okay. We asked our readers some of their favourite (for better or for worse) featured characters and here's what they said.

Joanne - *COMPANY*



Patti LuPone as Joanne, © Brinkhoff/Moegenburg

Patti LuPone picked up the WhatsOnStage, the Tony and the Olivier Awards for her take on Joanne in Marianne Elliot's revival of *Company* – and it's easy to see why. Classy, profound and slightly menacing, topped off with a show-stopping rendition of "The Ladies Who Lunch", LuPone embodied Joanne masterfully.

Rizzo - *GREASE*



Dan Partridge as Danny and Jocasta Almgill as Rizzo, © Manuel Harlan

The faithful leader of the Pink Ladies can be a little tricky. She dismisses Sandy joining the group and pushes away the people who try to care for her when she seemingly needs them most. However, we want to see more of the tough and fearless leader, including her more sensitive side, and hear songs like "There Are Worse Things I Could Do."

Eponine - *Les Misérables*



Amena El-Kindy as Eponine, © Deen Van Meer

In the musical, Eponine certainly steals the hearts of the audiences, if not Marius. As an independent, ragged fighter she vastly contrasts the innocence of picturesque Cosette, right to her tragic end.

Nicely Nicely Johnson - *GUYS AND DOLLS*



Jonathan Andrew Hume as Nicely Nicely Johnson, © Manuel Harlan

You only have to look to the Bridge Theatre to see how much audiences love this character with a nightly encore of "Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat". So nice, he sings it twice.

Anita - WEST SIDE STORY



Anita certainly goes through it in the Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim/Arthur Laurents favourite. Taking on a big sister role to Maria, she remains protective and sympathetic, even when she loses her beloved. The role in the recent movie adaptation earned Ariana DeBose many awards, including an Oscar.

The WEST SIDE STORY company © 2021 20th Century Studios. Photo by Niko Tavernise

Audrey II - LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS



This list would not be complete without a villain, and which better one to include than the “Mean Green Mother From Outerspace”?!

Corbin Bleu as Seymour in LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, © Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

Paulette - LEGALLY BLONDE



In no way are we dismissing the iconic Elle Woods here by including the friendly Paulette. Everyone just seems to love the salon owner as much as she loves Ireland. Of the recent Regent’s Park revival, one critic praised Nadine Higgin in the role as “a scene-stealing joy, every gesture and intonation beautifully judged and comically endearing.”

Nadine Higgin in LEGALLY BLONDE, © Pamela Raith

Dawn - WAITRESS



As one of Jenna’s shy but bumbling best friends, Dawn enjoys a – some may say – charming romantic storyline while remaining ever-faithful to the important people in her circle. We see you, Dawn!

Evelyn Hoskins in WAITRESS, © Johan Persson

Che - EVITA



As the narrator, Che is always present. Depending on the version you’re watching, he’s either representing Che Guevara or the everyman, as he follows Evita through her turbulent years. A special mention to Mistress, too!

Tyrone Huntley as Che, © Marc Brenner

Ado Annie - OKLAHOMA!



Reviewing the latest West End Revival, one critic said "Georgina Onuorah's wonderful, show-stealing Ado Annie is gorgeous ..." We just can't say no to the funny romantic.

Philip Olagoke (Cord Elam), Georgina Onuorah (Ado Annie), © Marc Brenner

Genie - Aladdin



Who wouldn't love the promise of three wishes coming true? In Disney's *Aladdin* it is the Genie who becomes a friend for life with show-stopping introduction numbers and top comedic timing.

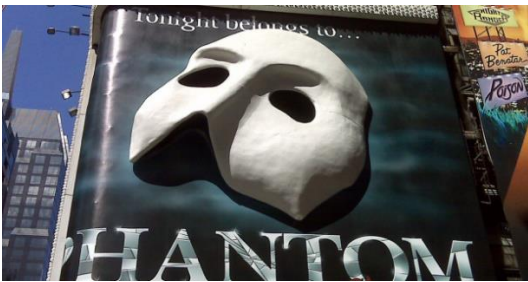
Yeukayi Ushe (as Genie) in Disney's *Aladdin*, © Deen Van Meer



Young adult *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* TV series reportedly in the works at Disney Plus

Alex Wood

The original novel may get a new adaptation



The mask from the Broadway production of the musical version of *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (© Monique Wingard / (CC BY 2.0))

Gaston Leroux's 1910 novel *The Phantom Of The Opera*, which was previously adapted into the blockbuster musical of the same name, is expected to get the small screen treatment. A new report from Deadline has said that Kenny Ortega, who tackled the *High School Musical* and *Descendants* series, will oversee the new series, titled *Phantom*, with the hopes that a franchise similar to *Descendants* will emerge. Circling a Disney Plus run, it is being written by Giovanni M Porta (*At Midnight*) from a story by Porta and Eric Bromberg. Things are reported still very early doors, but hopes are high. Leroux's tale, set in the 1880s, follows a reclusive figure who is obsessed with a young soprano that he wants to take under his wing. The musical, which was turned into a film in 2004, is currently playing in the West End. It closed on Broadway last spring.



GET TO KNOW THE MUSICALS OPENING ON BROADWAY BEFORE YEAR'S END

by Darryn King and Hayley Levitt

SUNSET BLVD

Opens 20 October

Andrew Lloyd Webber is back on Broadway—as if he never said goodbye—and, after the downtown sensation of *CATS: THE JELLYCAT BALL*, it's like he's cool again, y'all. Visionary director Jamie Lloyd offers up a stripped-back, smoky treatment of the sumptuous opera-musical about a faded Hollywood star longing for her glory days. By all accounts, Grammy-nominated former Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger is an electrifying Norma Desmond. "I cannot wait to come for blood on Broadway," she said in her Olivier acceptance speech earlier this year. Let the bloodletting begin. *Previews 28 September / Opens 20 October / St. James Theatre*



Nicole Scherzinger in the London production of *SUNSET BLVD*
(Photo: Marc Brenner)

A WONDERFUL WORLD: The LOUIS ARMSTRONG Musical

Opens 11 November

The story of jazz legend Louis Armstrong gets the musical treatment in *A WONDERFUL WORLD*, a bio musical co-directed by Christopher Renshaw, Christina Sajous and the show's Tony Award-winning star, James Monroe Iglehart. The show delves into the life of the man behind popular tunes like "What a Wonderful World" and "When You're Smiling," but the story is told by the wives that shaped his life. *Previews 16 October / Opens 11 November / Studio 54*



James Monroe Iglehart in *A WONDERFUL WORLD*
(Photo: Jeremy Daniel)

MAYBE HAPPY ENDING

Opens 12 November

MAYBE HAPPY ENDING, a futuristic romantic musical comedy by Will Aronson and Hue Park, stars Darren Criss and Helen J. Shen as a pair of abandoned helper-bots who find love and connection in an isolating world. The show rides to Broadway on the buzz it's accumulated through years of productions; a 2016 Korean-language world premiere in Seoul, followed by mountings in Japan and China, and a 2020 English-language debut at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre. The original musical is directed by Tony winner Michael Arden, who earned his trophy just last year for helming the Broadway revival of *Parade*. *Previews 16 October / Opens 12 November / Belasco Theatre*

TAMMY FAYE

Opens 14 November

Katie Brayben brings her Olivier Award-winning performance as televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker to Broadway, leading a cast that also includes two-time Tony winner Christian Borle as her husband Jim Bakker and two-time Tony winner Michael Cerveris as Reverend Jerry Falwell. With a book by James Graham, the show also brings a brand-new score from Elton John, the rock-star composer behind Broadway's *AIDA*, *BILLY ELLIOT*, *Lestat* and *THE LION KING* (Jake Shears of *Scissor Sisters* writes the lyrics). Rupert Goold directs the production, returning to Broadway with his first musical since *American Psycho*. *Previews 19 October / Opens 14 November / Palace Theatre*

SWEPT AWAY

Opens 19 November

The Avett Brothers set their music to a fully conceived stage musical about the 1884 shipwreck that inspired their 2004 concept album, *Mignonette*. Directed by Tony winner Michael Mayer (*Spring Awakening*, *american IDIOT*), the show stars Tony winner John Gallagher, Jr, two-time Tony nominee Stark Sands, Wayne Duvall and Adrian Blake Enscoe as the four-man crew cast adrift in a lifeboat after their yacht is sunk. Tony-winning playwright John Logan (*Red*) writes the book that binds the time-tested folk-rock score, which will also be bolstered by nautical stage craft fit for a Broadway stage. *Previews 29 October / Opens 19 November / Longacre Theatre*



Adrian Blake Enscoe and the company of *SWEPT AWAY*
(Photo: Julieta Cervantes)

Death Becomes Her

Opens 21 November

Robert Zemeckis' 1992 dark comedy about the price of eternal beauty is bringing some of Broadway's best to the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre. Tony nominees Megan Hilty and Jennifer Simard star as washed-up actress Madeline Ashton and her mild-mannered frenemy Helen Sharp—the pair of looks-conscious women fighting for the affections of plastic surgeon Dr Ernest Menville (two-time Tony nominee Christopher Sieber). Michelle Williams, of Broadway and *Destiny's Child* fame, plays Viola Van Horn, purveyor of the magic potion that is sure to inspire some ghoulish visual effects. Directed and choreographed by Tony winner Christopher Gattelli, the show has a book by Marco Pennette and music and lyrics by Julia Mattison and Noel Carey. *Previews 23 October / Opens 21 November / Lunt-Fontanne Theatre*

GYPSY

Opens 19 December

It's Audra's turn in Jule Styne, Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents' oft-revived musical about striptease artist Gypsy Rose Lee and the stage mother that made her. Audra McDonald, a six-time Tony-winning stage icon, is taking her crack at the infamous Momma Rose in a new production directed by George C. Wolfe at the newly renovated Majestic Theatre. Wolfe and McDonald previously collaborated on the 2016 Tony-nominated production of *Shuffle Along, Or The Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed*, so the pair have a proven track record when it comes to revisiting classics with a modern eye. And as the first Broadway revival to be produced after the passing of all three of its original creators, this *GYPSY* could have fewer creative constraints than ever before. *Previews 21 November / Opens 19 December / Majestic Theatre*



Audra McDonald
(Photo by Caitlin McNaney for Broadway.com)



New musicals to see in autumn 2024 in the UK

Tom Millward

As the summer slowly comes to an end and the leaves begin to fall, curtains across the nation will be rising for new musicals for the very first time this autumn. Here's a selection of shows we're all looking forward to.

WHY AM I SO SINGLE?



Leesa Tulley and Jo Foster, © Matt Crockett

SIX creators Lucy Moss and Toby Marlowe are bringing us their next "big fancy musical, *WHY AM I SO SINGLE?*, with an imminent world premiere official opening night set for 12 September. What to do when you're struggling to find a follow-up to a global phenomenon (whilst also being embroiled in romantic woes)? Decide to write a musical about that, of course! Can lightning strike twice with this semi-autobiographical offering? The wait will soon be over. (Garrick Theatre in London, from 27 August 2024.)

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A MUSICAL



Sinitta and Nina Wadia, © Oliver Rosser

Director-choreographer Craig Revel Horwood is putting the world premiere cast of *NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A MUSICAL* (led by Nina Wadia with Melissa Jacques or Sam Bailey) through their paces this month ahead of an impending debut. Inspired by the iconic NOW compilation albums, the show revolves around two schoolfriends in 1989 and their reunion 20 years later and features timeless hits from the likes of Whitney Houston, Wham!, Blondie, Tears For Fears and Spandau Ballet. There'll also be guest appearances from popstars such as Sinitta, Sonia, Carol Decker, and Jay Osmond along the way! (On tour from 6 September 2024.)

A FACE IN THE CROWD



Ramin Karimloo and Anoushka Lucas in rehearsals for *A FACE IN THE CROWD*, © Ellie Kurtz

The hotly anticipated world premiere musical *A FACE IN THE CROWD* features a book by Sarah Ruhl and songs by Elvis Costello. Billed as a “cautionary tale about the dangers of celebrity, power, and politics” in which a local radio producer interviews an incarcerated drifter in his jail cell, the Young Vic’s outgoing artistic director Kwame Kwei-Armah directs a stellar cast that includes Ramin Karimloo, Anoushka Lucas and Olly Dobson. (Young Vic in London, 10 September to 9 November 2024.)

CAKE: THE MARIE ANTOINETTE PLAYLIST



Zizi Strallen, Renée Lamb and Millie O'Connell, headshots supplied by the production

Although the Marie Antoinette-infused pop musical has been staged in concert versions on tour and at the West End’s Lyric Theatre, *CAKE* will finally be seen in a fully staged production in London this autumn. Telling a tale of scandal and retribution for the ill-fated French monarch (played by Zizi Strallen) after she meets commoner Jeanne (Renée Lamb), the cast also includes Millie O’Connell and a returning Travis Ross. (The Other Palace in London from 13 September to 10 November 2024.)

BECOMING Nancy



Genevieve Nicole, Joseph Peacock, Rebecca Trehearn and Mathew Craig, © Alexis Chabala

Director-choreographer Jerry Mitchell is going to have a busy time this autumn! Not only is he helming *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA* following its previous stint in Plymouth, but he's also bringing passion project *BECOMING Nancy* to the UK. Set in 1979, the piece follows David Starr, a brilliant sixth former with a penchant for pop idols like Blondie, Sting, and Kate Bush. It has music by Stiles and Drewe, who are always worth a listen! (Birmingham Rep, from 2 October to 2 November 2024.)

FLY MORE THAN YOU FALL



FLY MORE THAN YOU FALL, artwork supplied by the production

Set for its UK premiere this autumn is Eric Holmes and Nat Zegree's new musical *FLY MORE THAN YOU FALL*, telling the story of Malia, a young girl whose life is upended when her mother is diagnosed with terminal cancer and yet finds solace in her writing. Holmes is known for his work on stagey TV series *Smash*, so we're certainly keeping an eye on this one. (Southwark Playhouse Elephant in London, from 18 October to 23 November 2024.)

SUPERYOU



SuperYou, artwork provided by the production

Another show that has been experienced in a concert format – at New York's Carnegie Hall and in London's West End – is *SUPERYOU*. Lourds Lane's rock-infused musical, which follows a comic book artist who discovers self-love and her own voice as her superheroine creations come to life, has now been reimagined as a completely sung-through production and is about to debut in Leicester. (Curve Studio in Leicester, 22 October to 9 November 2024.)

HERE & NOW – The Steps Musical



Blake Patrick Anderson, Sharlene Hector, Rebecca Lock and Hiba Elchikhe, © Matt Crockett

Steps songs? In a musical? What more would anyone need to hear in order to be salivating over the prospect of hearing some late '90s/early '00s bangers performed to a brand-new story – set inside a supermarket where all manner of romantic hijinks are afoot? How about a cast that includes Rebecca Lock, Hiba Elchikhe, Blake Patrick Anderson and Basement Jaxx lead vocalist Sharlene Hector?! It'd be a tragedy if this doesn't tour across the nation and find a longer life! (Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham, from 9 to 24 November 2024.)

The LIGHTNING THIEF: THE PERCY JACKSON MUSICAL



The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical, artwork supplied by the production

Calling all demigods! The UK premiere of *The LIGHTNING THIEF: THE PERCY JACKSON MUSICAL* is almost upon us. For those unfamiliar with Rick Riordan's series of best-selling novels, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, think *Harry Potter* but infuse it with the famous gods and monsters of Greek mythology. Our young trio of heroes in this case include the son of Poseidon, the daughter of Athena and a satyr. (The Other Palace in London, 23 November 2024 to 2 February 2025.)

