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'Sweeney Todd' review

in opera to bring sophistication to the role of Judge Turpin, and create a three-dimensional character.

whoa...Johanna's real-life father is playing Judge Turpin #creepy? #sweeneytodd@IIT

Yes, as if Professor Hanlet doesn't get the interesting and distinct honor of being one of very few faculty members to participate in a 33rd Street Production, he is also playing a character that lusts after his daughter-figure, who happens to be played by his real-life daughter. The playbill also alludes to this comical, yet odd situation, stating "BTW, he claims to never having done [sic] anything creepier than singing lustfully after his own daughter." I thoroughly appreciate the tongue-in-cheek clarification.

Also in the main cast is Kevin Gomes with a delightful comical performance as the Italian con-man, Adolfo Pirelli, Elise Thrasher playing the Beggar Woman, Kunle Popoola, as the innocent Tobais Ragg, Neal Ansani as dawdling Beadle Bamford, and Erik Johnson playing Jonas Fogg, the insane asylum warden.

The 11-person ensemble was wonderful. Each member did a fantastic job in support of the main cast, and I always have tremendous respect for the chorus-members, as they work just as hard, if not harder than the larger roles, to create a better experience for the audience.

Pretty women, pretty awesome duet #partyonwayne #sweeneytodd@IIT

The most notable performance in my opinion, and my favorite part, of the musical was a duet between Mitchell and Hanlet. Their rendition of "Pretty Women" conveys the proper tension between the characters of Sweeney Todd and Judge Turpin that I find necessary in that scene. Though I've heard the song before (the aforementioned Tim Burton movie), the pair's melodic entanglement is nothing short of perfection, and most definitely rivals the movie version of the song. The only complaints I have for the actors were the accents. I was so confused, some actors had them, others didn't. As the play is set in 19th century London, I would have loved over-exaggerated Cockney accents, or something more resembling English accents, but I'm just a fan of consistency and historical accuracy, it didn't take away from the overall performance. Though I must say, Gomes did a brilliant Italian accent in his interpretation of Pirelli.

I LOVE THE CHAIR! #soupsimpressed #sweeneytodd@IIT

For the resources 33rd Street Productions has access to, they did an amazing job in transforming the Hermann Hall Auditorium. It really felt like a theatre, though the lighting and sound could use a little fine tuning, I understand the difficulties.

As for the set, I appreciated the 19th century costume, and was absolutely delighted by costume changes in Act II (what can I say? I'm a sucker for fun clothes.) The icing on the cake was most definitely the barber chair. 33rd Street Productions' Set Construction crew rigged it so Sweeney Todd's victims actually fell down to their fate below. It was an adrenaline rush every time Mitchell pulled the handle. The music was performed flawlessly by the orchestra. I absolutely loved it, though I will say that the beep used to startle the audience, and to add to the tension and ghoulish feeling of the performance, was absolutely enraging. It scared me every single time, jumping in my seat, but in some odd way made the experience better.

Director/Technical Director, Brian Lynch, took a page in the playbill to express his "Early Morning Thoughts" that included an eloquent statement summing up his feelings about theatre, and this production, that I felt necessary to mention, because it's easy to be cynical and list all of the negative things that were in this performance, only to insult to the people who worked for months to bring an audience a few hours of entertainment. "5:27 a.m.: The support of people who have volunteered their time to be here has been inspiring. Even when those on-stage had been told

to go home after a rehearsal ran late into the morning, they insisted it would be helpful to stay and work through some technical issues in the show with our backstage crew," Lynch stated in the playbill. "Why do I do this? It is not for myself; for the glowing lights nor the name on a poster or in a program. I do this to offer everyone a chance to be something they may never have been before -- a community sharing their very own differences between a common goal. Not just a performance."

"Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" will be playing next weekend on Friday February 17 at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday February 18 at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. (the last performances) in the Hermann Hall Auditorium for all of those still interested in seeing this murderous musical.

Want to write your own review of "Sweeney Todd" or rant & rave about something else? Contact ae@technewsiit.com for more information. Are you a tweeter? Follow @TechNewsIIT on Twitter!

Navy Pier redesign exhibit

By Laura Casas Gurri
TECHNEWS WRITER

One of the most famous tourist attractions in Chicago is, without any doubt, Navy Pier. This icon has become a must see location for the city's visitors, while remaining popular with Chicagoans.

Since its inauguration in 1914, this Chicago landmark has had to work rather hard to reinvent itself and change with the times.

In 1995, a major re-opening added most of the current stores, shops, restaurants and tourist facilities.

Later, in 1999, Navy Pier opened its latest attraction, the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, which since then has become the third-largest theater company in the Midwest.

In order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its opening, Navy Pier wants to renew itself and create a new space to attract more people (in 2009, Navy Pier had over 8 million visitors!).

In order to select the best designer to work on the new pier, a world-wide competition began last September. By January, the proposals were reduced to five selected finalist teams, the designs could be seen at the Museum of

Contemporary Art until February 1. Our very own Crown Hall was chosen to host this exposition for a full week.

The proposed projects share a common base, which is the integration between earth, wind, and water. Each team presents its own new vision of this space while keeping its singular items, such as the Ferris wheel, the Children's Museum, and the Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

One of the candidate projects, Imelk, include contributions from the Department of Architecture's Assistant Professor Marshall Brown, Studio Associate Professor Martin Felsel, and Adjunct Professor Terry Guen.

The presented designs are amazing. You should make an effort to go to Crown Hall and the Navy Pier website and lose yourself in the designs. On the website you can give your opinion about the designs, and who you think the winner should be.

If you did not have time to go to Crown Hall and see this exposition, but you want to be part of this decision that will shape Chicago for years to come, visit the Chicago Architecture Foundation or the Navy Pier website and email them with your opinions.

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Jimmy John

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