

Sit back and enjoy as world goes round

By Gary Smith

The Hamilton Spectator

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There's a good reason to go see *And The World Goes Round*. Her name is Lyla Miklos and she sings with the power and pain of Judy Garland, the sophistication of Barbra Streisand and the humour and warmth of Judy Holliday.

The fact she's surrounded by a pleasant little revue of Kander and Ebb songs is just icing on the cake.

Two of Broadway's greatest musical talents, they created scores for umpteen terrific shows from *Chicago* and *Cabaret* to *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *The Rink*.

Their songs were sung on stage by the likes of Liza Minnelli, Chita Rivera and Gwen Verdon. They also wrote beautiful numbers for Barbra Streisand and Robert Goulet.

Their talent is amazing. Think Rodgers and Hammerstein with edge. It's hardly surprising then that their output was the inspiration for an Off Broadway revue that showcased their talents.

And The World Goes Round is named for a number from the film *New York, New York* and is a real indication of just how lethal these boys were. Take a social relevance song like *Class* from *Chicago*, or a tongue in cheek bat-me-in-the-kisser number like *The Grass Is Always Greener* from *Woman of the Year* and you can understand how humour, truth and raw-edged sophistication made Kander and Ebb the next Comden and Green in the Broadway panoply.

Well, the revue that recalls some of their best songs has everything here from *All That Jazz* to *New York, New York*. Happily too, there are less familiar tunes from shows like *The Happy Time*, *Flora The Red Menace* and *Woman of the Year*.

Because the show was put together some time ago, there are no numbers from more recent Kander and Ebb shows such as *Curtains*, *Steel Pier* and *The Visit*. Maybe those are yet to come in *And The World Goes Round 2*.

This showcase of song and dance suits the small stage at HTI's Studio Theatre perfectly. There's plenty of room to spread out and dance but there's also an intimacy that helps sell songs like *Maybe This Time* and *My Coloring book*.

Musically the show has its troubles. Christopher Bee's energetic pit band isn't always together. Sometimes it's not with the singers on stage either. No real collisions take place and fortunately this is a mostly seasoned cast that can roll with the punches.

Miklos is definitely the force to reckon with here. When she sings a song like *Maybe This Time*, it stays sung. When she digs into *Class*, with Richelle Clements, it's both funny and excoriating all at once.

Bethany Charters, always good value on stage, has fun seducing Dustin Jodway in Arthur In The afternoon. She also nails A Quiet Thing from Flora The Red Menace.

Jodway tends to force too much on numbers like Kiss Of The Spider Woman and We Can Make It. Loud isn't necessarily better.

Richelle Clements had some rough voice troubles at the performance I caught. The thing is she knows how to sell what she's singing even when she's fighting a raspy throat.

Newcomer Dan Botham works hard to keep up with his experienced stage companions here. His voice is frequently breathy and he's sometimes out of step but he pastes on a smile and keeps going.

If you're looking for a non-threatening night out that just asks you to sit back and enjoy the ride And The World Goes Round should be perfect. And there's always Lyla Miklos occasionally taking centre stage to make you shiver. She's worth the price of admission all on her own.

Gary Smith has written on theatre and dance for The Hamilton Spectator for more than 30 years.

Need to know

What: And The World Goes Round

Who: Hamilton Theatre Inc.

Where: 140 MacNab St. N.

When: May 6-7, 13-14 and May 14 matinee at 2 p.m.

Tickets: 905-522-3032