



Lyric Theatre Singers
sizzle with Too Darn Hot

Description

Annual June Broadway tunes concert celebrates Cole Porter among others

By **Byron Toben**

The **Lyric Theatre Singers** really sizzled as it celebrated its **29th anniversary** with its **annual June Broadway tunes concert**, this year called ***Too Darn Hot***. Broadway fans will recognize that tune from Cole Porter's classic show, based on a troupe performing Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*.

The terrific ensemble consists of 42 dedicated singers who actually pay to join the group, which rehearses throughout the year to perform both this and its annual Candlelight Christmas concert. Despite some turnover, there are always talented newcomers to keep the total at 42. This year there were nine such additions who adapted smoothly.

The breakdown by voices, was: 16 sopranos, 12 altos, eight tenors, four baritones and one bass.



Act One led off with four tunes with less than the full chorus, such as a duet featuring **Tarik Azgut** and **Shy Shalev** in *Answer Me* from the 2017 *The Band's Visit*. The Lyric Theatre Singers founder and artistic director **Bob Bachelor** arranged this version.

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All the Sopranos and Altos then combined for *Overture Delle Donne* from the 1982 *Nine*. All the tenors and basses then rejoiced with *Men in Tights* from the 1993 *Robin Hood*.

After two solos, **Will Fech** doing *Will Power* from 2015 *Something Rotten* and **Anastasia Tsai** rendering *She Loves Me* from the 1963 *Vanilla Ice Cream*, the first act ended with a rousing medley of eight selections from *Ragtime*, again with some version arranging by Mr Bachelor. I had loved the book by E.L. Doctorow as well as the movie, but never did get to see the musical version (which had had its world premiere in Toronto in 1996 before moving to New York two years later) so this was a special treat for me.



Act Two opened with a rousing performance of *Welcome To The Rock* from the 2017 triumph of *Come From Away*.

Some all-time composers were to be highlighted in this act with two selections each. Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein were represented by *This Nearly Was Mine*, from their 1949 *South Pacific* and *C'est le printemps*, from their 1996 *State Fair*.

'I was particularly taken by the eight-song *Cole Porter Medley*. It featured, inter alia, a nice solo by soprano Muriel Bernard Browman of his 1936 *I've Got You Under My Skin*.'

Stephen Sondheim was likewise noted with his *Everybody Says Don't* from his 1964 *Anyone Can Whistle* and *Getting Married Today* from his 1970 hit *Company*.

I was particularly taken by the eight-song *Cole Porter Medley*. It featured, inter alia, a nice solo by soprano **Muriel Bernard Browman** of his 1936 *I've Got You Under My Skin*. The medley ended with his song, which gave this year's revue its title, *Too Darn Hot*.

The show ended with the tune *Light* from 2009's *Next to Normal*. Mr Bachelor had mentioned in his welcoming comments that this show is about light.

But wait! It ain't over till it's over! Quebec audiences expect an encore and got a really bouncy one with *Sit Down, You're Rocking The Boat* from the ever-popular 1960 *Guys and Dolls*. That song, sung by Damon Runyon's character, Nicely-Nicely Johnson, reminded me that there were several non-stage singers who were crucial to this entertaining show.



The live musicians, who played nicely were, on piano, **Chad Linsley**; on woodwinds, **Paul Carter**; on drums and percussion, **Guillaume Pilote**; on bass, **Caleb Smith** and on synth and keyboard, **Christopher Smith**.

Stage and co-director **Cathy Burns**, herself a talented performer, has nicely handled myriad tasks including choreography.

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Guest choreographer **Jonathan Patterson** has nicely raised the dance element of the Lyric Singers to a near professional level. Remember, these are part-time performers with school, family or employment responsibilities to balance with their recreational passion.

Finally, nicely, nicely credit must be given to slim dynamo president **Louise Dorais** who keeps it all going year after year.

Too Darn Hot ended June 15 at the DB Clarke Theatre.



The Lyric Theatre Singers' **Candlelight Christmas Concert** is slated for **December 5 to 8, 2019**.
For information on CDs, DVDs, auditions or donations, contact lyrictheatresingers@gmail.com or 514 591-4149

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Byron Toben, a past president of The Montreal Press Club, has been WestmountMag.ca's theatre reviewer since July 2015. Previously, he wrote for since terminated web sites Rover Arts and Charlebois Post, print weekly The Downtowner and print monthly The Senior Times. He also is an expert consultant on U.S. work permits for Canadians.



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