





productions

---

in the spotlight

---

behind the scenes

---

ticket services

---

theatre dining guide

---

about the league

---

employment opportunities

---

auditions

## audience reviews

***A Chorus Line, Magic Circle Theatre***

**Review:** One of the best shows I have seen at Magic Circle. The choreography was amazing. The cast ranged from very talented actors to dreadful ones. Part of the casting was terrible. "One Finale" was the disappointing. Not a good way to end that show. The costumes for that scene were weird. The choreography was so repetitive. My suggestions are to re arrange the closing number, cut pauls monologue completely, and shorten cassie's dance solo. Still, it was a great show and a must see!!  
- Suzanne

**Review:** Brent Null kicked butt. This is his best work to date. I just saw it tonight and was in love with every person on the line. Laura Lothian is a natural. Pepper Van was a genius. But i have to agree that the finale number was not a good way to leave the audience. THE GAY GUYS were hilarious!! Some of the speeches in the show need to be cut down or sped up. I don't think Paul's monologue should be cut completely, just shortened. It seemed that the actor didnt fully grasp what Paul is going through. The "Sing" song was so funny. There were adorable. The orchestra was beautiful. I give the show four and a half stars. This is a MUST SEE!!! Go and see A Chorus Line!

**Review:** Wow! Do yourself a favor and get out to see this fabulous production! This cast is hugely talented and their hard work really shows off. All of the production staff needs to be congratulated on this production. First off, this is a dance show, and Pepper Von's choreography is wonderful and he has obviously worked this cast very hard and inspired them to professional level results. Vocally the show is amazing. Jennifer Vaughn, Magic Circle's musical director should be very proud. Seldom do you get a dancing ensemble that sounds this great. And the solos are top notch as well. Brent Null directed this production, and he has kept the production tight, well focused, face paced and has elicited several really great acting performances from this cast. The set and lighting design were both very effective and appropriate. And finally,

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the cast. Seldom in community theatre do you get such a consistently good cast. I would especially like to complement Steve Gold (Zac), Christie Axelson (Cassie), Sarah Henshaw (Sheila), Amanda Morish (Diana), Cassie March (Kristine), Timothy Stewart (Al), David Garrison (Greg), Laura Lothian (Val), Jerald Bolden (Richie) and Nicky Garcia (Paul). This production had me laughing and crying. This was only the second performance of the run, so this production is only going to get even better. If I had to pick a couple of nits, it would be these two. First, the downstage left spot is focused a little low. Whoever stands there gets the top of their head cut off a little, if they stay in their line (as they need to do). A little refocusing of one lighting instrument would fix this. Second, the pause between the final "casting" and the beginning of the final number (the "performance" of One) goes on a little too long without anything happening. This pause is necessary for a costume change. Since this is a "backstage musical", my suggestion would be to let the audience see a little bit of the transition onstage. Let the audience see the legs lower, the rear milar curtain lower, maybe have the stage manager make a final sweep of the stage, before the main drape closes in preparation for the "beginning" of the show. This would use up a good portion of what is now dead time. There were an elderly couple who actually left during this transition, thinking the show was over. This production is too good to let that happen. I would hope that some adjustment here will be made over the next week. Finally, I would like to say to anyone for in Sacramento who thinks it is just too far to go to Roseville, do yourself a favor and hop on Interstate 80. You'll be here in no time and you will be very glad that you did!

- Richard Spierto

**Review:** I saw this production on opening night, and was entertained and impressed. It is the last show of their season, and certainly ranks as the best in what has been a real spotty season. The shows have either been wonderful or awful (Great Sound of Music, a gripping Our Town -- with an all teen cast no less, a rollicking revue called Nightclub; and a dreadfully plodding Camelot, boring Company and a spotty Thoroughly MODern Millie). Back to Chorus Line: choreography by Pepper Von was brilliant and this mostly college aged cast CAN dance. The singing was superb and the comic timing of the actors was flawless - especially through the Hello Twelve sequence. See it before it closes. I definitely rank it better than some productions I've seen at Music Circus (free parking in Roseville too).

- Melissa Sturges

**Review:** Thought the show was fantastic! Great cast! Nice little touches I had not scene in a Chorus Line production before. Really enjoyed Al, Greg and Kristine. They added so many laughs to the show. I agree that Cassie's number shoud be shortened (but I think that in every production of A Chorus Line I see). It is a very dated number and goes on WAY TO LONG. I thoroughly enjoyed the choreography in the "Hello Twelve" number but the finale "One" did not have the impact it usually does. The plays at Magic Circle keep getting better and better. I look forward to seeing more from some of their newest directors (Null and Garrison). If they keep it up Magic Circle will be the hottest ticket in town!

**Review:** Saw this on Saturday night. It is the second show I've see at the Roseville Theatre (the other being Sound of Music directed by the same man, Brent Null). As others have mentioned the Cassie sequence does seem to plod on, but I disagree with others who didn't like the "One" finale. I thought it brought I nice uplifting vibe to the whole show. One thing to remember if you're going. The producers are being true to the Broadway original and therefore there is NO intermission. Make sure you make a potty break before you settle in for two hours. All in all, if you love musical theatre be sure and catch this one before it closes.

**Review:** I thought this was a very entertaing show! I agree this was a great cast!! I especially enjoyed Kristine and Al thought they were very funny together. I also enjoyed the part of Val. I think it had fantastic choreography and I really loved the closing number, all the dancers were totaly insinct. I feel this show is a definite must see!!

**Review:** AMAZING CAST!! Im comming back with a group of friends. Not knowing anything about this show before seeing it- I was blown away. The performers were solid; everyone brought a strong presence. I would like to return to the show to see how the understudies hold up to their counterparts. Favorite songs were "At the Ballet," "Montage 4," and "Tits and Ass" very powerful vocals in these numbers. It amazed me to see the performers in these numbers dance and sing while making it all appear so simple.  
- Tamara

**Review:** On a scale of 10 I would have to give this show an obligatory 8, just because it seemed they tried hard but were just missing the target. The choreography, while well thought out and planned was in my opinion delivered with the attitude that the cast was performing for its own satisfaction and not the audience. What was supposed to be a high energy, behind the scenes look at a dynamic Broadway casting was a

plodding, unenthusiastic "Community theatre" play. Having friends who are season ticket holders we have accompanied them to many of the productions and it seems the talent pool in Magic Circle must be very shallow as we have seen the same actors cast over and over again in principle roles. The dance scene for "Cassie" was way to long given the limited dance experience and style of the performer, and the monologue by the character "Paul" was a bit self indulgent and a seemed like more of a soapbox for a socio-political statement. Yelling is not acting, as was shown between "Cassie" and the "Director Zach" Plays of course must be allowed a bit a freedom in their dialogue order to convey a message but Magic Circle might do well to mention in its program or at least in a sign at the door advising "mature subject matter and language" being presented. At one point during last nights performance (Sat July 5th) a whole row of audience members walked out of the performance after they seemed to be upset and offended by some of the subject matter. There were some bright spots during some of the numbers (Goodbye 12, Opening dance sequence) and for all their effort, I would say if you have a chance see the show.

- Frank

**Review:** Saw this show on 7/5. Exceptional! What a hugely energetic and talented cast Magic Circle Theatre has assembled for one of the most difficult shows in all of theatre. This is one show not to be missed. The monologue by Paul received thunderous applause when the actor portraying him (Nicky Garcia in a heartbreaking performance) finished. The number "Sing" by Al and Kristine (played by Timothy Stewart and Cassie March) brought the house down. That song alone is worth the price of admission. And the incredibly talented Laura Lothian, who plays Val, was quite the firecracker during her song "Dance 10: Looks 3". The cast was a complete ensemble and brought out the real emotion of the piece without dragging down the energy and life of the show. I definitely give this show 4 out of 4 stars. Don't miss this production!

- Bill M.

**Review:** The dancers should be dancing for themselves in this show as it is supposed to be an audition where they are trying to prove themselves throughout and are not supposed to be acting like they are performing for an audience. The show is a bit racy at times, you should be prepared for that! Don't fault the performers for performing the show as written. The Director makes quite a few decisions for a show but can not decide to cut down a monologue or dance that are in the script that way. This is a fabulous show and a must see! It is obvious from start to finish the heart and soul that all of them have put into their performance!

- Jessica

**Review:** Saw this show on Saturday night after reading a review (Three Stars) in the Bee earlier in the week. It was my first experience at Magic Circle Theatre, and I must say I was impressed. The venue is a restored 1920's theatre. Our seats were center lowers, but after the show I walked up to the balcony, and it appears there is not a bad seat in the house. As for the production, I've seen Chorus Line twice before and I think this production did drag in a few spots (as others have mentioned). However I believe the Bee's assessment was true, although I must say I wasn't blown away by Pepper Von's choreography. The best part of this show is the strong singing of the young actors (mostly college students). I made the drive from Fair Oaks, and given the quality of the show and the free downtown parking in Roseville it was a good value for our entertainment dollar. We will be back to see another.

- Ken

**Review:** This was my 3rd show at Magic Circle and I was both impressed and disappointed. First the good: Pepper Von is an amazing choreographer, and while I don't think this is his best work, it shouldn't be missed. Usually the sets at Magic Circle are lacking (and that's being nice) but this show doesn't require much in that area and Magic Circle actually rose to the occasion for once. Jennifer Vaughn has once again pulled a nice performance from the singers and should be applauded. Now that bad: A few numbers are rushed, which is the trademark of Jennifer Vaughn. For a theater as nice as Magic Circle has, the lighting is (and has been in the previous 2 shows I've seen) woefully inadequate. I'm not sure if it is due to too few instruments or just poor focusing. And lastly, Brent Null, again pulls out a poorly directed show, despite a talented cast. I have seen many of these actors elsewhere and they did not live up to their potential. Mr. Null seems to miss beats at times, while dragging out other moments. One thing I have noticed in his shows are that his actors are constantly having actions that neither support the words, nor make any emotional sense. If you like the show - go see it. But I'm not sure I would recommend it to a person who has never seen it before.

- JoAnn L.

**Review:** As a long time patron of Magic Circle, I must state unequivocally that is one of the best shows I have ever seen there. Saw the production on Sunday, July 6 with a group of friends who were experiencing Magic Circle for the first time. We all came away from the show with the feeling that we had just seen something very special that

doesn't come along too often. I was fortunate enough to see this show in New York in 1978. I am not comparing the two productions mind you, but seeing this one certainly brought back many wonderful memories of seeing it 30 years ago. I loved it that when we entered the Roseville theater 15 minutes before curtain, the actors were already on stage going through a series of stretches and were greeting one another, that it actually felt like we were peeking in backstage at an audition! What a nice touch. "At the Ballet" was beautifully sung and acted by three very talented ladies (Sarah Henshaw, Chelsea Baldree and Rachelle Jones) in front of a group of four shadowy figures at the upstage barre all going through their routine - it gave me goose-pimples (one of many times that happened). The entire Montage sequence (including the impressive Amanda Morish as Diana Morales) was so effervescent that I felt as though I needed to catch my breath when it was over - especially Montage part 4. One of the best performances of the afternoon was the perky and sassy Laura Lothian as Val. She has incredible stage presence and a huge voice for her petite frame. The young man who played Paul (Nicky Garcia) gave one of the most honest and heart-wrenching performances ever done on that stage talking about his experiences working as a "dancer" growing up. "What I did for Love" brought tears to my eyes as I watched the face of each and every performer and saw on their face the raw emotion of the moment. And the finale was simply fabulous. All of those gold costumes against the lights and the mirror wall was another goose-pimple moment. I have seen nearly every show at Magic Circle for the last 20 years, including all of the ones directed by the gentleman who directed this one. The theater is fortunate to have someone of his talent and caliber directing shows for them. Each one seems to get better than the one before. Keep up the great work. We'll be back to see this one again before it close and I suggest you do the same!

- Eva S

**Review:** This cast is NOT a cast of "dancers", in the true sense of the word. BUT: They can dance, and were taught to move to the best of their abilities. Pepper has a true gift at taking what he is given, and turning it into something that shows the cast in the best light. Cassie may not have been as strong this time, but her vocals (as well as acting!) were certainly enough to make up where her dancing fell short. Tim and Cassie March killed me with their rendition of "Sing". I practically fell out of my seat laughing, and it was clear NEITHER of them needed to be mic'd, as they both have incredible power in their voices. Bottom line: Fabulous show, wonderful, emotive cast, PHENOMENAL choreography, and wonderful direction on part of Brent Null! This show is often hard to do with community theaters as there is not always a strong enough

dancer base to really carry it through, but this, with Brent's opting to change up the "in" list every show and forgoing the intermission to maintain the continuity of the show, and Pepper's ability to make every dancer look the best they can, makes this show well worth seeing!

**Review:** The choreography was fantastic. It is obvious by the lack of technical dance abilities by most of the cast that the choreographer did the best he could with what he had to work with. I have to admit, I was bored and found myself dozing off during most of the show. I loved the purity and innocence of Paul's voice as well as the "Sing" number. There were some incredible songs in the show but were sung with no emotion. I was especially disappointed by the "At the Ballet" number. The girls blended very well together but Maggie solo was so poorly sung. She had the power high note that should have been a crescendo that knocked me and everyone off their seats. But I didn't get that AT ALL. Her voice was quiet, nasal and airy. Considering that was the end of the song, her lack of power and expression made the song incomplete. If this is the best that Magic Circle has to offer, I couldn't fathom wasting another \$20.

**Review:** A show with great singer/dancers- but very poor job on the direction. Parts of the show lacked emotion and needed movement- when they just stood there like blank statues and song- didnt care for that. Lighting was off on several cues. I would not suggest this show to see.

**Review:** This is a very different take on A Chorus Line. Not done in the traditional way, and sometimes for no reason. This was however a very entertaining show to watch. Most of the cast was very good, and some should not have been allowed on stage. The montage was fun but it kept repeating the same choreography! There was no moment in that song where I felt like they were just having fun. Gimme the ball should have been the climax of the song and it left you hanging. Some actors clearly don't understand their lines. The actor playing Paul did not understand his character at all. He took the most predictable choice. Paul is not a child any longer and has had years to cope with his life and choices, and while it is difficult for him to recollect his experiences he should never sob on stage. Especially fake sobbing. I actually thought that Maggie's crescendo was not disappointing. The Finale was so boring and unclear on what was going on. It was the same steps again and again again. As well as Rehearsal One, that song is supposed to be very artistic. The tap dance was cute, the opening scene was very entertaining, Sing was adorable, the two gay guys were so funny, and the direction was good enough.

**Review:** A good production. Not the best I have seen from Magic Circle, but not the worst either. Every bit of two hours long, an intermission would have been nice. (Was it done on Broadway without an intermission?) The choreography and direction were great. Technical dance ability ranged from one character to another, but it was clear that all of the major players have both solid training and skill. Some of the singing was definitely sub par, but for the most part bigger singing roles were obviously given to the better singers. "At the Ballet" was beautiful. All three of the ladies singing it had lovely voices. And all very different from one another, which was nice. The harmonies at the end of the song gave me chills, in particular whichever singer was on the top notes had a gorgeous, pure quality. The number between the husband and wife couple was another standout, with the wife hilariously patter talking and the husband had one of the strongest voices in the show. The opening number was also quite good. The "I really need this job" solos were very well sung. Were there problems here and there with the production? Yes. Is there any community theater performance- or professional for that matter- in which this is not the case? No. Easily worth the \$22 for a fun night and a touching performance!!

**Review:** My favorite characters were Sheila, Bobby, Kristine, Al, and Maggie. Val was also adorable! Pretty much a good cast all in all. Even some of the smaller parts like Don and Bebe and Greg stood out in this ensemble cast. Good show!  
- Lacey

**Review:** Pretty good. Kind of long, but the funny characters made it bearable until the last 20 mins or so when it just seemed to drag on and on. I particularly enjoyed Al and Kristine's dynamic, while my parents couldn't stop talking about the "At the Ballet" girls and the "Dance: 10, Looks: 3" girl.

**Review:** Hmm...where do I start? First off, there are some people who are great and well cast. Secondly, there are some people who should NOT be 'on the line.' There are "dancers" who are not dancers by any means and the fact that they get picked for the job is laughable. Brent Null directs some scenes very well, but others it's not clear why he made the decisions he did. The set is really nice until the finale when the silver wrinkled "mirror like" sticker comes down with the silver glitter curtain. It looked worse than a middle school set. The costumes were good until the finale. They didn't flatter anyone and just looked awful. As for the actors, this show is about being a triple threat and there were only a few stand outs. Laura Lothian who plays Val simply steals the show. She's pure

magic to watch and you can't help but want to see more of her. Nick Adorno plays a great Mike. He shows off great vocals and dancing ability. Tim Stewart and Cassie March who play the young married couple Al and Kristine were wonderful to watch. They were great. "At the Ballet" was a nice number, with Sarah Henshaw playing a wonderful Sheila. She was another triple threat. Chelsea Baldree was a great Bebe but after certain numbers, you wonder why she wasn't Morales. She was a great dancer and actress with lovely pipes. Rachele Jones was a let down as Maggie. Her voice was a heavy soprano with a dragging vibrato. She didn't act the part well at all. She was just flat and boring. The girl playing Diana, Amanda Morish, was not by any means suitable for the part. Her dancing was not up to par for this show: stiff, not graceful. She was clearly lost during her rendition of "Nothing" and she just looked bored to be there. Kendra Evans, who was a cut dancer, was obviously a well trained dancer with a nice set of pipes when she sang "I've got to get this job"...it's a mystery why she wasn't on the line. Nicky Garcia, as Paul, was good but the monologue was a bit too long and the audience was restless during it. Then there's the woman who played Cassie...I believe her name was Christi Axelson. She was not entertaining. She often looked blank faced and bored. She had no energy and wasn't fun to watch during her big dance number. I'm not sure why she was the choice for this coveted role. Her counterpart, Zach, played by Steve Gold was a standout. He gave an energy to Zach that almost made you forget that Cassie's big scenes were about her and not him. He was one of the best parts of the entire show. It was a decent show, but a bit too ambitious for a community theatre production. There just isn't enough talent to pull off a true cast of triple threat performers. It's worth the price of admission to see Val, Kristine, Mike, Zac, Bebe and Sheila.

- Regina

**Review:** Not the best production of this show I have seen, but still every bit worth the price of admission. It was clear that both actors and creative crew put a lot of time and effort into this show, and the somewhat mixed results are definitely not through the fault of any one untalented individual. Rachele Jones as Maggie was quite obviously one of the only true triple threats of the show, and perfectly cast. Chelsea Baldree as Bebe had a strong, deep voice that suited her role (and perhaps would have suited the role of Morales, though I have no major complaints with the actress in that role) perfectly, and Sarah Henshaw as Sheila had a nice, though quite airy at times, tone which fit her older role. It was clear that Miss Jones has had more vocal training than most, and hers was the only strong soprano voice among this cast of belters and dancers who can carry a tune. Other standout singers were Tim Stewart as Al, Nick Adorno as Mike, and Laura Lothian as Val.

- Carrie

**Review:** This was my first time seeing a show at Magic Circle, and I wasn't disappointed, but not blown away either. While some of the casting was weak, the lesser characters stole the show. Laura Lothian kills as Val, Kristine (Cassie March) and Al (Tim Stewert) are worth the price of admission, and Zach (Steve Gold) was terrifying and 100% believable as a Broadway director. The two feuding gays, Bobby and Greg (Dexter Galang, and David Garisson respectively) MADE the first part of the show. I enjoyed 'at the ballet' but without the girl who played Maggie (Rachelle Jones), she was very flat, and her voice didn't blend nicely with the other two.

Her acting and dancing unfortunately didn't make up for her singing. Chealsea Baldree was outstanding, and I was left wondering why she didn't have a larger role. Her voice was very clear and very pretty. While some of the dancers, weren't really dancers, the "montages" were incredible! (Save 'Nothing' which started off well, but Amanda Morrish had a fumble the night I was there- however to her credit she tried her best to recover.) The choreography was repetitive at times, but it wasn't bad! I did enjoy having a good dancer to watch in front during the rehearsal numbers and in the very beginning, And I also wondered why both Kendra Evans (soloist in 'I hope I get it') and Emily Cook (line captain) were not in more of the show. Both have more dance training than the rest of the cast. Overall I'd recommend to see this show before it closes, but just to be aware it is a community theater, and not Broadway.

- Rebecca B

**Review:** This was an interesting production of A Chorus Line- there were a lot of flaws ( I could not tell if it was the director or the actors' choices) but a lot of pauses in between lines- the show needed to be faster. The gal playing Dianna Morales did not know her song- major fumble while singing. There were a few other sour notes and some singers seemed to be screaming in the opening number. The director added in too much sexual content- with body movements and gestures- really made the show immature and inappropriate for this community. The final 20 minutes are a drab, the actors looked bored on stage and the final number includes hideous costumes. It was nice to see the cast reunite in that last number- some of the cut dancers seemed to be better dancers than the people on the line- as well as they had better vocals. The price of the show was too much for a student to pay. Not the best quality theatre :(

- T.W.

**Review:** The show was excellent.

**Review:** My wife and I saw the show last Saturday and enjoyed it. Thank you cast for doing a wonderful job. This is a show where there are typically no main characters, everyone is important, everyone is special and everyone has a story to tell - even if there are minimal lines. That is the main theme of 'A Chorus Line'. All the actors rose to that task and did a wonderful job. The characterizations of each role was accurately played and the orchestra was outstanding. Great job Brent! Great job Jennifer! Thank you one and all. The Actors and crew should be very proud of this production and all the work that went into it. It is NOT an easy show to do - convincingly. Let the show and characters speak for themselves. Remember also that only a few can be good actors & performers. You all did GOOD!!  
- John Chitambar

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