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## audience reviews

### Curtains, Runaway Stage Productions (Broadway Stage)

**Review:** While Curtains has a few problems on paper, there's nothing wrong with what's going on onstage. Director Bob Baxter does an admirable job of keeping the pace up and making sense of a murder-mystery with too many suspects. The original script writer and lyricist died before completing the work and the 2nd Act reflects a bit of too many chefs in the kitchen. But the cast is determined "the show must go on." Musically, the best songs in Curtains are the quiet unassuming ballads. They include "I Miss the Music," where the show-within-the-show's composer (golden-voiced Dan Mason) sings of the difficulties in writing without his ex-wife/lyricist (played by the ever-appealing Kate Richardson) and "Coffee Shop Nights", in which Darryl Strohl most engagingly describes the grey life of being an unmarried cop. Strohl, playing homicide detective Frank Cioffi investigating a murder within an ill-fated musical, is a gracefully understated comic making charming use of a Boston accent, a solid baritone croon, and an instinctive, razor-sharp timing. Lillian Baxter is expectedly strong as the wise-and-whip-cracking producer. Her bitter uber-blonde daughter is played with spunk by the high-kicking Kris Farhood. Michael McElroy is delightfully flamboyant as the show-within-a-show's acerbic director. Andrea St. Clair, as the winsome ingenue, wins Cioffi's heart. Her Fred & Ginger dream-ballet w/Strohl in the 2nd Act is one of the show's highlights. This number is the perfect collaboration of great music (both that written by Kander & Ebb and that played by the orchestra led by James Lohman), eye-catching gowns/tuxes (Lillian Baxter pulling double duty as both performer and costumer), and lush choreography (Strohl also pulling double duty as the production's choreographer and leading man). It's everything you could want in a RKO fantasy. Equally brilliant is the Act 1 finale saloon dance where the saucy can-can dresses enhance the exciting choreography, performed by an energetic and attractive ensemble. I usually find some aspect of the 24th Street Theatre experience thoroughly annoying, however the night I saw Curtains, there were no feedback squeals from the sound system, the temperature was comfortable, and the sparse lighting equipment seemed to adequately illuminate the cast. If you like good old-fashioned musicals, but with a sexy and dangerous slant, go see Curtains!

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