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## Rock of Ages Review

Lyceum Theatre Sheffield – until 22 March 2025

Reviewed by K.Roberts

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*Rock of Ages*, rock or flop? Having not watched the film, I didn't know what to expect, but I was reliably informed that it was worth watching and that the musical should be of a similar ilk.

Based on the Sunset Strip Boulevard, it revolves around the Bourbon club and two young wannabees with dreams of making it big in the world of music, amid their blossoming romance.

The story is pretty basic and its lack of depth is filled by the rousing and stirring rock ballads which fill every scene and lead us through the montage of comical sketches, to the touching moments between the lead characters. The two lead characters are Sherrie Christian and Drew Boley, played by Grace Hadabora and Adam Walker respectively. Throughout the story of Sherrie and Drew and mixed messages of love, via strip joints and boyband, they both excel in their roles. They literally hit every high note with aplomb, especially Grace, who I thought excelled in her role.

Along with their burgeoning relationship, in the background we have the secondary story of the corrupt German developers father and son Hertz Klinemann (Phil Brownhill) and Franz Klinemann (Matt Bevan). The characters are played with great comedic effect by Hertz as he goosesteps around the stage followed by his camp son. The developers are challenged throughout the show led by Regina (Tara Kulbatski) and her band of protestors trying to stop the strip from being torn down.

The first half was a difficult watch at times despite the fantastic efforts of the cast as there were several technical issues affecting the performance. The dialogue could not be heard at times over the music and there were a few microphone malfunctions. This did on occasion make it difficult to follow if you're unfamiliar with the story.

Despite these issues it was all about the music and the band and cast didn't disappoint and the audience were treat to some classic rock ballads, via some talented musicians, who also act as Stacie Jaxx (James Smith) stage band. Jaxx was another great lead and played with great front man attitude by Smith, who oozes charisma and has great stage presence, revelling in the adoration of the female cast.

The whole cast were superb and a mention must be given to Helen Green, playing the madame Justice Charlier who adds another female lead to her already long list of feisty ladies. The highest accolade must go (in my opinion) to Tom Fox-Owens and Mark Holmes who play Lonny Barnett who was the narrator of the show alongside club owner Dennis Dupree. Their performances were energetic, funny and they had great chemistry. Fox-Owens performance as Lonny had the audience in stitches and regularly seemed to go off-piste in his desire to entertain the audience. Their second half duet of can't fight this feeling a particular high. They certainly carried the show and made the performance enjoyable.

My honest opinion is that it was a bit erratic in parts and not as smooth as I thought it might be for a well known show. Although the quality and talent on show is very good and worthy of a good review, the sound issues throughout prevent me from giving it higher than 3 out of 5, although as stated it was still enjoyable if hard to follow due to the issues. Despite this the show rocked...