

Corrin Rausch
Professional Play
Thea-1033-002
November 29, 2014

In “Catch Me if You Can,” the actor who played Frank Abagnale Jr. did a decent job of creating a believable character who interacted realistically with the other characters in the performance. Even from seats far from the stage, it was easy to see him reacting to other characters and evaluating his responses as his character would when trying to think of what to say to other characters. Even his interactions during the musical numbers with the ensemble cast (who were mostly attractive girls) was believable. Some of the action verbs easily identified were “to deceive,” “to flirt,” and “to win over.”

In the beginning of the show, there is a connection between Frank and the FBI Agent Carl Hanratty, but it is that of a criminal and the law that is pursuing him. But not far in, it is clear that there is another relationship developing between the two. Throughout the show, the relationship between the con man and the cop developed from a simple connection, to, eventually, a mutual trust between them. This was portrayed excellently by both the actors. There was clearly action and reaction happening consistently between the two characters, which helped add a deeper, more emotional connection not just from character to character, but from the audience to the story as well.

As a whole, the cast was talented and entertaining. Everyone exhibited high amounts of energy which was absolutely necessary in telling the story. Everything was well choreographed so that the characters who were supposed to be interacting with one another were, and those who were dancers or other members of the ensemble were present, but not distracting from the main action and story being told.

With all the flashy lights, beautiful dancers, and charmingly clever prop pieces, even talented actors couldn't escape the flashy fluff that expanded like a fiery marshmallow that got too close to the flame that is excess. As great as the acting was, it was difficult to really delve into characterization when everyone was erupting into redundant song and dance every two minutes. Unfortunately, the actors couldn't escape the writing--or the backup dancers who appeared out of nowhere just when it looked like things were finally getting interesting. This musical fluttered faithlessly between being a flashy Broadway fluff piece and a hard-hitting, plot-driven cautionary-tale-for-the-modern-age. This play either needed to have more substance like deeper dialogue among characters, or it should have settled for "flashy and entertaining."

This is a musical with a story that begs for attention. The main character, Frank Abagnale Jr., is a complex individual with an equally complex home life. But in spite of the actor's more-than-decent performance, it was impossible to feel anything for him or any of the other characters for more than the time it took the dancers to march onstage. There were only a handful of musical numbers that enhanced the character, and almost all of these included a single character singing an emotional ballad free from all other distractions.

In conclusion, this was a musical with a talented and skilled cast of actors, who obviously had objectives, strategies, and subtext, but whose performances might have been better highlighted in a musical with more substance. Although the efforts of the cast and crew should be applauded, this show was trying too hard to be "Anything Goes" while maintaining the emotional complexity and integrity of "Company."