

WHADDYA KNOW – WE'RE IN LOVE!

Reviews May 2018

Fringe REVIEW: Whadd'ya Know – we're in love! @Rialto Theatre

Posted On 10 May 2018

By : Brian Butler

Tag: Brighton Fringe, David Mountfield, Foundry group, Glen Richardson, Jerry Ruff, Review Brian Butler, Rialto Theatre, Whadd'ya Know – we're in love!

If you need an antidote to world politics and Brexit, then slip back in time to the era of Hope, Crosby and the Marx Brothers and join the ocean liner *Freedonia* with its motley trio of musicians Joey, Lenny and Mikey – who are not at all what they pretend to be.

ADD in the diva Sam, who may be a stowaway but maybe not and you have an hour-long musical romp with period style songs, jolly and silly lyrics, sharp-shooting dialogue and an impossible happy ending.

The four principals, who all play musical instruments, share a variety of roles and **David Mountfield** excels as the Fatty Arbuckle look-alike really stupid drummer Mikey one minute and the next he is the ferocious First Officer who sings a wonderful tirade about hating music – “when I see a deaf guy I wish it was me.”

Glen Richardson who plays a great piano is also hilarious as the unbelievably rich and lovelorn Prince Frederico XIII, in a terrible wig and even worse wayward moustache. The prince saves the bacon of the fake musicians and sets them up for life. It's that kind of barmy plot.

The songs by **Jerry Ruff**, who plays the guitar-playing love interest in the show, are all clever parodies with a sharp sarcastic edge. Amy Sutton as the sultry singing siren is terrific in her delivery and though she plays the field we know she will end up with the right man, even though he avows that he wants Sam to give up her singing career and become his property .

As one character says: *Hank's my stage name; my real name is Nelson but you can call me Joey.*”

If that kind of silliness is up your street, this is a show not to be missed. A real treat.

Whadd'ya know – we're in love! is at the **Rialto Theatre** on May 14 , 23 and 24.

Reviewed by Brian Butler

Sussex Playwrights

[11 May at 12:04](#) ·

Sussex Playwrights Reviews:

'Whaddaya Know - We're In Love!'

The Foundry Group

The Rialto Theatre

The team that brought you the hit show Ministry of Biscuits, currently on a rural tour, now pauses to premiere a great potential new addition to The Foundry Group's touring repertoire.

Four actors, a bunch of instruments and the occasional stuffed seagull have a ball performing this screwball comedy musical, with terrific original vintage-style songs by Jerry Rulf, now gathered together with book by Brian Mitchell.

Three guys on the run have stowed away on a 1930s Mediterranean cruise ship and have to pose as a music quartet to escape detection ... spot the problem?

Enter Amy Sutton, sashaying in as Sam, the girl in the green velvet dress, in full sultry smoky-toned mode - and Jerry Rulf's laconic Joey's a gonner.

Rulf and Sutton - mostly - rise above the lunacy, as shades of the Marx Brothers and some bonkers character doubling kick in around them.

David Mounfield and Glen Richardson duck behind the curtain to re-emerge in mad new character, Mounfield channelling TopCat's Benny the Ball as Mikey and in full rant mode as music-loathing Chief Officer Brown. Richardson has real piano and singing flair as Lenny, and whips up audience near hysteria with recalcitrant fake moustache and crazed Italian accent as lovelorn Euro aristo Prince Frederick XIII.

Everyone sings and plays, getting a buzzing Rialto Theatre into full party mood plus audience participation - just try stopping us ...

It's great good hearted fun performed in a tiny space; as with last year's Ministry of Biscuits I'd love to see it on a bigger stage, although the intimate setting does add to the general chaos.

Whaddaya You Know is back at the Rialto 14th, 23rd & 24th May.

Philippa Hammond

Whaddya Know – We're In Love!

The Foundry Group

FringeReview

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
SHOW**

Genre: [Comedy](#), [Contemporary](#), [Family](#), [Fringe Theatre](#), [Live Music](#), [Musical Theatre](#), [New Writing](#), [Theatre](#)

Venue: [The Rialto Theatre, 11 Dyke Road](#)

Festival: [Brighton Fringe](#)

Low Down

Song-and lyric-writer Jerry Rulf and book-writer Brian Mitchell, who also directs, have concocted one of the best-executed silliest entertainments of this Fringe. Props and lighting are co-ordinated by Mitchell too with the help of Rialto's technical resources.

Review

Song-and lyric-writer Jerry Rulf and Brian Mitchell, who also directs, have concocted one of the best-executed silliest entertainments of this Fringe. *Bear North* had a touch of Ivor Cutler in it. This production by The Foundry Group has no excuse; it's plain daft, with platinum-tipped songs, copper-bottomed acting and golden-topped voices. The tunes have survived as earworms through another show before I get to write this. Props and lighting are co-ordinated by book-writer Mitchell too.

Rulf's Joey fronts a band on electric guitar. Keyboard man Glen Richardson and 'idiot' drummer Mikey (David Mountfield) have stolen aboard a second-rate cruise-ship, masquerading as musicians. Except of course they can play, and do so with superb opening instrumentals showing Richardson's remarkable keyboard deftness and lightness of touch, Mountfield's serious drumming skills and Rulf's overall musicianship – he boasts a fine light baritone to Mountfield's comedic bass and the darker barite of Richardson..

Mountfield's almost Laurel-like idiocy transforms with a cap into Chief Officer Brown the loud-mouthed bully who wants nothing better than to kick them off ship. He hates them all, particularly that drummer 'I hate him most of all' raising one of the best laughs. His routine 'I hate music' recalls Bernstein's song of the same name, without the redeeming conclusion. 'When I see a deaf guy I wish that it was me.' He produces a hard Brooklyn accent. Mountfield's transformation is horribly convincing, yet his Mikey's a sublimely cringeworthy creation. Richardson enjoys an avatar too. More on him later.

Rulf's Joey is the fixer. They need a fourth member and who should stroll by but the gorgeous Sam. Amy Sutton's known for several things, appearing recently as a spiralling alcoholic in scenes of great power. But nothing quite like this; and she can sing. There's the inevitable bust-up after Joey presents her with a new song penned straight for her. It's the title song. And with lines as seductive as 'mend my shirts' and his later on saying he wants her to be his property, you sense she's really going to fall for that.

Sam's a free agent she tells us. Cue Richardson's bewigged Frederico XIII. He's sweet on Sam too. If his 'One Gold Ring' doesn't let her know he adds 'there'd a message hidden in there' but despite the princess title and much else Sam now regrets Joey's enticements. Yes this has the ring of truth about it.

Frederico XIII becomes mournful, Joey heroic, Brown vindictive and Sam revelatory. If you don't know the denouement I certainly won't spoil it for you. As a story it could have been written in the 1920s, but it's as fresh as the coming weekend.

'Where's Joey' where two of the cast out of sight behind the screen produce boards for audience participation is a highlight.

If Rulf anchors proceedings as it were, Richardson's and Mountfield's double-turns alternate pathos and bathos deliciously. Sutton's slinky smoke-backed siren not only sings but in the narrow compass afforded her, she relishes her volte-faces, and you can read her tiniest inflections of disdain, anger, regret and tearful withdrawal. She makes something three-dimensional out of the sketch of Sam. And the final reprise with Sutton and Rulf is genuinely touching.

It's difficult to recall all the lyrics without an MP3 from the show and there's no lyrics list which there should be – because a lot of people are going out humming those tunes and leaving many comments. Quite right too. There's first-class musical entertainment here, crouched under the disguise of a schoolboy plot. Irresistible.

Published May 25, 2018 by Simon Jenner