

BROADWAY NIGHTS REVIEW

I Could Have Danced All Night – The Music Of Lerner & Loewe
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'Pops' brings refreshing context to Broadway hits | CONCERT REVIEW

- By [Dan Shaw](#)

For those of us who are used to hearing Broadway hits in recorded renditions completely divorced from their original setting in musical theater, the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra's Saturday night "Pops" concert was as much informative as it was enjoyable.

More than once during the performance of a series of tunes produced by the pens of the famous song-writing partnership formed by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, I found myself thinking, "I didn't know they did that." Other times it was, "I didn't realize that came from 'Brigadoon'."

The three singers who performed the tunes made recognition easy, as did the orchestra and chorus that played and sang behind them. Philip Hernandez lent his sturdy baritone to powerful effect in the song "They Call the Wind Maria," from "Paint Your Wagon," and undergirded the soprano of Tamra Hayden in such favorites as "It's Almost Like Being In Love," from "Brigadoon." Their duet on that tune was one of the best parts of the evening.

Hayden took her own solo turns in "I Could Have Danced All Night," and "Wouldn't It Be Lovely," both from "My Fair Lady," probably the most famous Lerner-and-Loewe musical of all. The popularity of that piece was well attested to by the fact that six songs from it appeared on the program, taking up most of the second half of the performance.

With the addition of the two encores from "My Fair Lady" — "Get Me to the Church On Time," and a reprise of "I Could Have Danced All Night" — the audience could leave the theater with a gratified feeling that they had just been treated to nearly the entire musical, minus the chat. Yet, to prevent anyone from forgetting that these songs weren't written in a vacuum, but instead were intended for use in a dramatic presentation complete with plot and characters, the singers acted out a few scenes.

So we got to see Henry Higgins flustered as he tried to coach Eliza Doolittle to disguise her native Cockney accent when saying "The Rain in Spain Falls Mainly on the Plain." And then we witnessed grow elated when she finally does manage to force out the correct vowel sound. He's so happy, in fact, that he has to sing about it.

Of course, knowing the dramatic purposes for which these songs were composed is no prerequisite to enjoyment of them as music pure and simple. Their unforgettable melodies stand alone.

But the acted-out scenes did allow for a better appreciation of the words, reminding the audience of what the singers were singing so passionately about.

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