

[Back to Dale Reynolds' Reviews - Home](#)

A Man Of No Importance



This little-known 2002 chamber musical, based on the 1994 film, "A Man of No Importance," surrounds a failed production of Oscar Wilde's 1891 scandal, "Salome," which proves to be too racy for a Dublin of 1964 and is banned by the all-powerful Church.

Bus conductor Alfie Byrne (Dominic McChesney) runs an amateur theatre company in Dublin, consisting mainly of his bus passengers. The robust – if terrible – company adores him for his kindly ways and his unerring good taste. Today, all that would alert them to his homosexuality, but even he isn't totally aware in this deeply homophobic and Catholic country.

It's an amazing show, with a perfect score by Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens, and an amusing book by Terrance McNally. Such a shame that this production is over and no other production is on the horizon. The cast was exemplary, with solid voices and decent acting. McChesney fully embodied the gentle soul of this non-descript man, one who won't set hearts aflutter, but is the mainstay of any decent society. McChesney's singing voice carried well and his characterization was sweet and full. All the others were excellent, so it's hard to pick one out over the other, but Mary Chesterman, Marci Richmond Herrera, David Gilchrist, Keith Barletta, Bret Shefter, and Matt Stevens were memorable. Thank Michael P. Wallot for casting it so well.

The warm and charming set design of Kevin Williams, with Kathy Gillespie and Barbara Weisel's period costumes decorating the actors, and the illuminating lighting design of Katherine Barrett helping enormously. And, last, we thank the four-piece pit-band of grand Irish tradition, under the able hand of Corey Hirsch, the production entity of Good People Theatre Company, and the overall direction of Janet Miller.

This is a tough show for long runs. It is intimate (which means no huge houses), has a cast of twelve, and a four-piece orchestra, but there is an Original Cast recording of the Lincoln Center production and others will find a place for it in their repertoire. Let us hope soon, for all our artistic sakes.