

by Beverley R. White

# RED 'N' BLACK REVUE REVIEWED

"So, how was the Red and Black?"

I don't get it! What was wrong? The Red 'n Black was good this year... there were some excellent singers, excellent comedians, excellent dancers... but, for some reason, it just didn't seem to click. Some little spark was missing; don't ask me what it was.

It wasn't the seating. The balcony had more action than the front row, though, especially on the opening night. (Tip: Always sit with the seemingly obnoxious screamers in the back row -- you'll have a lot more fun. These people feel far freer applauding for the acts they like, and you will too.)

It wasn't the opening act, I'll say that much. The two MCs, one male, one female, were offstage singing a great rendition of "It's Magic" while some more-than adequate dancers did an attractive pantomime routine. Standard variety show fare, but well executed. Nah. Couldn't have been that.

It definitely wasn't the two skits in the first act. No, it couldn't have been the daddy en route to a parent-teacher interview chatting with the chic young lady about "men's lib" (the concept had been done, but originally rewritten and repackaged to come off as a rather intriguing and definitely hilarious little role-reversal item). It sure as heck wasn't "Broadcast News," THE highlight of the show, a wittily "gender-free" satire on the evening news, nor its commercial (a would-be douche advertisement, featuring the liberated dad of the first skit discussing freshness with his teenager... until a large automated rodent came in with a drum and just kept going and going and going). No. Those were great, worth the ticket money by themselves.

Maybe... Darrin the business major, Darrin the guitar player, Darrin the songwriter?! Darrin, the fellow who sang the country-tinged ditty about the deep blue sea? *Maybe*. That one was kind of, just kind of, dull, but you can't blame poor Darrin for the whole -- let's get the grammar right, now -- lackingsness of spark. No. Wasn't him. Wasn't it.

He was kind of boring, though. The songs were a bit uninspired. (NO! No scapegoating!) <Thank you, inner conscience.>

It wasn't the easy-listening cabaret singer who did the variety-show standard material. She was good, though she could have moved around a little more.

The Irish/Scottish dancers weren't the reason. They were quite good, very well rehearsed, but I'm still trying to figure out why one of them was doing a dance about a clothesline.

Could it have been the MCs, one doing Wayne (as in, "You are watching Cable 10, Aurora, Illinois' community access channel"), one doing the "oh-give-me-une-break" standoffish young lady, reviewing the films that had run at the "Loonie Wednesdays" weekly movie eventette? Well, that was a *bit* strained. More than a bit. Besides, I've got more to say about the MCs.

It wasn't Bad Karma. No, they were a good hard rock band. They were a *loud* rock band, of course (what good rock band isn't?). I really didn't need that ear, anyway. Besides, they do a great "Back In The U.S.S.R."

Let's see. It wasn't intermission...

Now then. It wasn't the C.O.H. Dance Posse. (You might want to skip this paragraph if you're allergic to gushing.) No! Can't blame the hip-hop group! They were great! They ruled! I spent the past two years surrounded by people who start rapping and hip-hop dancing in the middle of classes (I swear), people who missed the Fly Girls auditions but could have made it in with little to no sweat; this C.O.H. Posse (what does that stand for, anyway...?) could have been made up of those people. I loved them, and I don't even like rap-style anything -- what does this say, people? Don't blame the posse!

Think think. Maybe the MCs again? "Wayne" came back in tights, reciting stuff from *Romeo and Juliet*, begging the young lady (Sarah) to help him with his Shakespeare class ("Maybe if I actually *do* some of this stuff, I'll understand it") RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SHOW?!? (Are we being just a little bit weird?) Doing the ballroom scene to *C&C Music Factory*?!? Uh huh... okay ... great realism here.

At least Eight Boots managed to balance out the MCs. They're a really good a *capella* group (I don't know the first thing about that kind of music, but one guy in the balcony was screaming "JUSTICE! EIGHT BOOTS! I LOVE EIGHT BOOTS!" after "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," which is supposed to be really hard to do).

But wait! The MCs came back... they lowered this great big screen and showed the lovely duo engaging in fisticuffs to what I believe was Tchaikovsky music. This was cute -- Sarah does pack a bit of a wallop. We laughed, we cried. Ho hum.

Next came two guys on guitars who sang "Losing My Religion" and another song (the latter having indecipherable lyrics, so don't ask about the title). "Losing My Religion..." There's a good song that could be so easily ruined, and they didn't ruin it!! They were really good! (They did mess up the lyrics, though.)

More MCisms followed though. I was let down. "Wayne" sent flowers to someone whose name started with S, so Sarah took them, thinking they were from her partner, but they were for the director (Susan -- that's an S name). Another chewout, but no fisticuffs. Partner feels bad, gives girl a flower, girl forgives guy, guy and girl sing fluffy song from "Footloose" (they ARE good singers). You could sleep through the flower bit, but they did sing well.

And finally, finally, after all the hype I'd heard (the kickline's great, the kickline's excellent), there was the kickline! And what do you say about a kickline, especially when you're a womyn? It was good (a bit petite for a kickline -- I expected something out of the trailer for *An American Tail: Fievel Gos West*). It too, had fallen victim to the "lackingsness of spark." Maybe it was too small, and you cannot, can not, CAN NOT have a miniature kickline.

It's hard to understand. It was a good show, despite some weaker moments. The MCisms shouldn't be so obvious and predictable. That may have been it.

I guess I liked it anyway.  
Yeah, I did.



### Thankyou:

To my fellow members of the 45th Executive '91, especially Susan Magasi, our wonderful Director, thanks for a GREAT job well done!! To the master and mistress of ceremonies, hats off to the both of you, incredible job!! To all the cast, crew, and sponsors: once again we put on another wonderful, AWESOME show!! To the technical staff and personnel of the Playhouse, without you we couldn't have done it again. Chris Brading, its always a pleasure working with you. Hope to see you again next year. To the wonderful people who came out and supported us, thanks a million!! To the wonderful dancers of C.O.H. Posse - we did it! All the hard work and frustration paid off. I'm proud of all of you. Thanks for sticking with it - you gals are the greatest. The Posse still lives on!! Thanks for making the 45th Red 'n Black Revue the most memorable yet, and for those who will bw back, let's make the 46th even more memorable next year.

Woody Lawrence

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