


HE SAID/SHE SAID CRITIQUES

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Denver Center Theatre Company Climbs To Comedic Heights in “39 Steps”

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The 39 Steps is a fast-paced farce, that follows the plot of Alfred Hitchcock’s 1935 film of the same name. The spin? All of the roles are played by only 4 actors. This theatrical challenge is the source of much of the substantial comedy in the piece, but in addition, the script quickly blossoms with several other Hitchcock references, making it a comedic goldmine for Hitchcock fans especially.

Fast-paced Hitchcock Appeals to Theatre Fans of All Ages

HE SAID: I thoroughly enjoyed this show on Broadway, and as I laughed myself through this marathon of a comedy I thought, “this is not my father’s Hitchcock.” With the individual touches DCTC has added to the show I can say that this is not your normal *39 Steps*. With the direction by Art Manke (DCTC’s *The Miracle Worker*), the cast added a myriad of their own unique bits and jokes to an already hysterical show leaving us with only one moment to breathe — intermission.

SHE SAID: This show was definitely crafted for a modern audience — the comedy is fast-paced and dense,

leaving the audience winded but satisfied after a turbulent plot. With dozens of locations and more than a hundred characters, the small cast and crew have their evening of costume, wig, and dialect changes cut out for them. This company is certainly up for the task, work hard to tell a rich story, and make it even more enjoyable by periodically winking at the audience to share their effort.

Gregory Plays Perfect Straight Man to Impressive Cast



HE SAID: The four actors in this show play all the characters, with Victoria Mack playing three different women, and Larry Paulsen and Rob Nagle playing over 100 characters combined! That leaves Sam Gregory, who arguably has the hardest job playing one role — Richard Hannay. He is the central character and straight man to all of the hilarity happening around him and has almost no break from his action on stage. Gregory, fresh from his stint in *The Real Thing* at Paragon (review [HERE](#)), was absolutely spectacular to watch as he flawlessly performed every beat in this show, nailing his dialect and every opportunity for comedy.

SHE SAID: I also enjoyed Gregory's performance immensely. He was funny, likable, and charismatic, and it was a joy for him to be the constant on the stage. I also enjoyed Mack's performance as several female characters, and thought that her dialect work was especially crisp. Paulsen and Nagle were the busiest of the evening, changing their costumes, hair, and dialects so frequently that I was surprised (and impressed) that they never mistook one entrance for another.

Direction and Design Elements Burst Through the Fourth Wall



HE SAID: Paulsen and Nagle were fantastic and, in my opinion, found a greater variety in each of their characters than the performers I saw on Broadway, especially with their range of effortless dialects. Perhaps my favorite addition to this production was the vast number of moments throughout the show in which they pointed out the fact that the two were playing multiple roles in what they knew was a play.

SHE SAID: The technical aspects of the production were also up to demands of the show, effectively following Hannay as he's chased across the British Isles. Consistent with the idea that the actors sometimes broke the fourth wall, many of the props and set pieces were actually old-fashioned film items, like the consistent use of empty film reels as steering wheels. This touch gave the production a unified style and succeeded in making the audience feel "in" on all the shenanigans instead of merely watching them.

The 39 Steps Offers An Evening of Non-Stop Laughter

THEY SAID: We both love hearty comedies with non-stop laughs (doesn't everyone?!) and having enjoyed this show on Broadway, we went in with high expectations. Denver Center Theatre Company's production of *The 39 Steps* surpassed them at almost every turn by going beyond the already hysterical written material and adding solid moments of comedic gold along with a unique aesthetic. Get your tickets now. You won't be sorry.

*Curious about this play? See the [Wikipedia entry for the stage adaptation of The 39 Steps](#). *The 39 Steps* plays in the Ricketson Theatre at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts until November 14, 2010. Click on the banner below for tickets and more information.*

