

## Urinetown The Musical

Music and lyrics by Mark Hollmann, book and lyrics by Greg Kotis

Stagecraft Theatre, Gryphon Theatre, 22 Ghuznee Street Wellington until 24 September

Reviewed by Ewen Coleman

Even though *Urinetown The Musical* is supposedly a satire on capitalism, class and social injustices amongst other things and was also intended as a parody of musicals and in particular Broadway musicals it falls very much into its own trap of yet another crass, cheesy Broadway hit.

It therefore requires something special to make it work as a production which is exactly what Stagecraft Theatre does with its presentation, currently playing at the Gryphon Theatre.

On a brilliantly designed set by Anna Lowe, reminiscent of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, which the show is modelled on, director Robert Ormsby, musical director Sam Rorke with Jody McCartney as director of music along with choreographers Mel Heaphy and Katty Lau have lifted the show into a realm that makes it very watchable and passably entertaining.

That the theme of public urination could have any fascination for an audience is confounded by this production that tells the story of the Urine Good Company, run by Caldwell B Cladwell (David Cox) controlling public toilets and making everyone paying to pee because of a 20-year water shortage. But when an attendant at one of the amenities Bobby Strong, (Kenneth Gaffney), decides to go against his boss Penelope Pennywise (Jane Keller) and get all the low life's busting to go because they can't pay to revolt, Caldwell B Cladwell has a problem on his hands. Especially when his daughter Hope (Kira Josephson) is kidnapped by the revolutionaries. This however is complicated by the fact that Bobby has fallen in love with Hope but their love is unrequited as both meet an untimely death along with Caldwell B Cladwell.

With its range of musical styles from jazz, gospel, classical opera, and full on razz-ma-tazz of the Broadway musical the show offers much for principles and chorus to excel in which they all do exceptionally well.

And while the heightened over-the-top style of acting becomes a little much at times it keeps the pace going with full on energy from start to finish.

The very innovative set also allows for lots of creative movement and dance routines which the show has in abundance so that it is a visual feast to watch.

The show also has a rather inane narration running through by Officer Lockstock (Daniel Pooley) and Little Sally (Gemma Revell), but again these two actors shine in their roles overcoming the shows inadequacies to make it another great production for Stagecraft Theatre.