

THE BOOK OF
MORM

'Mormon' returns to packed houses with outstanding talents

By Bob Evans

"The Book of Mormon" 2018
National Tour



"The Book of Mormon" returned to Kansas City's Music Hall for a third time as American Theatre Guild hosts the Sabates Broadway Series multi-award-winning, jaw dropping musical satire.

The production ignites the audience from the beginning scene when the background of Mormonism is presented to set the scene for the show to follow. And then, clad in black and white business attire (sans coats), the wannabe young (19ish) candidates await their assignment for their 2-year mission assignment. While the assembled candidates anticipate, then celebrate their mission assignment, the brightest and best of the class, Elder Price, nervously awaits his date with

destiny.



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Like Elder Price, Elder Cunningham bursts with excitement—but for finally a best friend. And the idea that this new best friend can't desert him overwhelms him with excitement. Seems Elder Cunningham tends to exaggerate at times and does not always adhere to the book of discipline for traditional Mormons. His short-comings could, possibly, spell disaster for the 2-year mission to Africa.

At the 2011 Tony Awards, "The Book of Mormon" captured nine and missed on several others, but claimed a total of 14 nominations. The most prestigious of the night, Best Musical of 2011, according to internet sites.

Uproariously funny, side-splitting sarcastic, witty, irreverent, and totally unconventional, "The Book of Mormon" possesses something to offend almost any devout Christian. However, carefully entrenched in comedy, the musical comedy breaks new ground in fusing satire and comedy. The genius behind South Park absolutely and positively delivered with "The Book of Mormon," their first Broadway vehicle.

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As a national tour of the Broadway blockbuster, quality comes in the traveling package. The sets, the lights, the sound, the costumes, the actors, etc. all possess Broadway experience or Broadway potential. Expect to see the same quality performance offered on the Broadway stage as we have in Kansas City for this limited run through Dec. 30, 2018.

Elders Price and Cunningham look like a modern era Laurel and Hardy with their contrasting shapes. Cunningham, the over-excitabile rotund character can steal the show if not balanced perfectly with the straight-stalwart Price. Perfectly matched and cast, Liam Tobin and Conner Pierson, as Price and Cunningham, electrify the audience when their on-stage chemistry ignites—which it does when they are first paired for their Africa mission trip. Even though Tobin is the “straight,” he garners plenty of laughs. His enthusiasm sends waves of energy from the start of his character and continues even through his “nightmare for hell.” His vocal skills certify that he’s definitely a Broadway lead performer. As the plump sidekick, Pierson captures the audience’s heart from his first lines. His explanations and reactions are classic. Pierson excels with physical comedy and projects his vocal and facial expressions throughout the auditorium with flair.

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As for the lead actress, Kayla Pecchioni belts out her songs with authority. Her pitch-perfect singing helps give depth to her character of the African ingenue. The men's dance ensemble provides one of the fastest paced tap numbers of recent memory. When they break into "Turn It Off," expect to be amazed and transfixed. The African characters also provide lots of fun, from the doctor who keeps exclaiming he has "maggots in his scrotum." to the Idi Amin-style opposition leader, whose name cannot be printed.

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As a special note and draw for local audiences, Kansas City is well represented with two locals bringing their years of experience with "Book of Mormon. Eric Geil continues in his third year touring with the national BoM tour as a men's ensemble member. Another local, Teddy Trice comes to the American tour in his first year after having completed two years down under in the first Australia national tour of "Book of Mormon." Trice was recently seen at the Unicorn Theatre prior to joining the American tour.



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Suffice it to say that "The Book of Mormon" will offend some. Anyone not familiar with the TV series South Park should take note. The language is strong. The content is sometimes way beyond normal, and some religious persons may be offended by the content, the language, and some depictions. South Park fans will find exactly what they expect, comedic sarcasm.

"The Book of Mormon" continues at the Music Hall Theatre in Municipal Auditorium. For tickets, go to American Theatre Guild website.

Tags: "The Book of Mormon", Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment, Kansas City, Kansas City Theater, American Theater Guild, Sabates Eye Centers Broadway Series, Music Hall, Municipal Auditorium Kansas City