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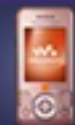
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## Review: The Producers

Nov 29 2007 by Alison Stokes, South Wales Echo

### The Producers, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

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WHAT makes a musical disaster?

Certainly not gyrating geriatrics, dancing Nazis and bad taste humour.

Mel Brooks' Broadway hit The Producers puts the comedy back into musicals – albeit a refreshingly un-PC humour.

In a nutshell, the show, adapted from the 1968 Mel Brooks film, tells of struggling Broadway impresario Max Bialystock (Cory English), who discovers he can make more money from a flop than a hit.

With the help of timid accountant Leo Bloom (League of Gentlemen's Reece Shearsmith) he finds the worst play ever – Springtime for Hitler, a gay romp about Adolf and Eva in Berchtesgarden.

He hires the worst director, a queeny old thesp called Roger DeBris, then sets about seducing his harem of randy and rich little old ladies to part with £2m.

And suddenly he has a sure-fire hit on his hands.

The show is a light-hearted romp from start to finish, packed with silly and saucy one-liners and good-humoured send-ups of all gay stereotypes.

English brings great energy to the role of Bialystock and while Shearsmith may not be the greatest singer, he too has comic timing on his side.

As the OTT director, DeBris, Stephen Weller was also great camp fun, although secretly I wished he was Peter Kay (who plays the role next week).

Scenes like the choreographed old ladies on walking frames, the leggy showgirls wearing sausages and beer steins on their heads, and the Busby Berkeley-style dancing Nazis just added to the silliness.

The Producers is definitely the most fun I've had at the WMC since Grumpy Old Women first landed.

It runs until December 8.

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