

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

THEATRE  
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## *ON THE TOWN*

Barrington Stage Company, Mainstage,  
30 Union St., Pittsfield, Mass. (\$20-\$65),  
413-236-8888, closes July 13  
*Pittsfield, Mass.*

"On the Town" made stars out of Leonard Bernstein, Betty Comden, Adolph Green and Jerome Robbins when it opened on Broadway in 1944, running for 462 performances. They stayed famous—but the show didn't. It's never been successfully revived in New York, nor does it get done regionally save on rare occasions. So I'm thrilled to report that Barrington Stage is putting on a production directed by John Rando ("All in the Timing") that is more than exciting enough to make you scratch your head in puzzlement. How could so exhilarating a musical have slipped through the cracks?



Even if you've never seen "On the Town," I bet you know what it's about: The place is New York, the year is 1944, and the characters are three sailors on a 24-hour shore leave who come charging into town in search of girls. They find them, but not without first stirring up vast amounts of

farcical chaos. The dance numbers are electrifying and the songs are by turns loony ("Carried Away," "Come Up to My Place") and tender ("Lucky to Be Me," "Some Other Time"). Sure, the plot's rickety-rackety, but with so much unmixed pleasure to be had along the way, who cares?

"On the Town" doesn't work without very well-made choreography, and Joshua Bergasse, who staged the dances for "Smash," delivers the goods in abundance. Though some of his moves are explicitly Robbins-esque, the comic numbers are fresh enough to make you wonder why his work

has yet to be seen on Broadway. Mr. Rando is, of course, universally and deservedly admired—he directed the brilliant "Guys and Dolls" that Barrington Stage mounted two years ago—and the members of his youthful cast, especially Deanna Doyle, Alysha Umphress and Tony Yazbeck, collectively slam it out of the park. The 10-piece orchestra is a bit on the skimpy-sounding side, but Beowulf Boritt's skyline set glitters and soars.

I've already seen one classy regional version of "On the Town," which New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse presented to stunning effect in 2009. Now there are two. Why can't Broadway get back in the game?

—Mr. Teachout, the Journal's drama critic, blogs about theater and the other arts at [www.terryteachout.com](http://www.terryteachout.com). Write to him at [tteachout@wsj.com](mailto:tteachout@wsj.com).