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BWW Review: ANASTASIA North American Tour Journeys to Philadelphia's Merriam Theater

The North American tour of Anastasia stars Kyla Stone as Anya, Sam McLellan as Dmitry, Brandon Delgado as Gleb, Gerri Weagraff as Dowager Empress, and more.

by Chloe Rabinowitz Nov. 24, 2021



The North American Tour of Anastasia—the sweeping, alternate-history/fairytale musical based on the animated 1997 film—journeyed to Philadelphia's Merriam Theater last night. The stage adaptation of Anastasia, featuring a book by theatre luminary **Terrence McNally**, and a score by the Tony Award -winning team of **Stephen Flaherty** (music) and **Lynn Ahrens** (lyrics), originally ran on Broadway from 2017 to 2019. The non-



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Equity National Tour is now making its way to theaters across the country.

Anastasia follows the central character of Anya (Kyla Stone), a young woman with amnesia in 1927 Russia, who sets off on a



path to unlock the mystery of her past. In her quest for answers, she teams up with

two conmen, street-smart Dmitry (**Sam McLellan**) and ex-aristocrat Vlad (Bryan Seastrom) who have an agenda of their own. With trust, bravery, and heart, the trio-pursued by a merciless Soviet officer (Brandon Delgado)-travels from Russia to Paris on a life-changing adventure that leads Anya to discover who she really is.

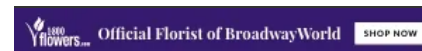
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As an audience member, it is almost expected for a production to have its standout performers. In the case of *Anastasia*, there are no clear standouts, simply because each member of the cast is outstanding, all vibrating on the same high frequency. This production is a well-oiled machine, and the cast plays off one another with a natural chemistry.

Newcomer Kyla Stone embodies the role of Anya with an earnestness that makes it impossible not to root for her every step of her journey. She captures the emotional nuance of the role beautifully, and not only has a gorgeous voice, but makes each song very much her own. **Sam McLellan** is a strong, scrappy, and feisty Dmitry, and is the perfect counterpart to both Stone as Anya and stage-partner-in crime Bryan Seastrom. Bryan Seastrom brings the requisite humor and warmth to the role of Vlad. He plays wonderfully off of everyone he shares the stage with but is especially great when paired with the scene-stealing Madeline Raube as Countess Lily. Brandon Delgado is compelling as the show's antagonist, Soviet officer Gleb, expertly portraying the character's conflicting emotions while singing the role to perfection. **Gerri Weagraff** as the Dowager Empress serves as an emotional center point of the show, drawing the audience in with equal parts strength and vulnerability.

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Featuring outstanding tour direction by Sarah Hartman, based on original direction by **Darko Tresnjak**, the North American tour of Anastasia translates beautifully from its original Broadway incarnation to a regional stage. The Projection Design by **Aaron Rhyne** becomes a character itself, seamlessly immersing the audience in scenes from the streets of St. Petersburg to breathtaking views of the Paris skyline. The costumes by **Linda Cho** have a similarly transporting effect, often eliciting audible gasps from the audience.

The North American Tour of Anastasia is a gorgeous production that is brought to life by a cast that creates magic together. Anastasia not only takes you on a "journey to the past", it fully transports you to an experience that you won't want to end.

For tickets to Anastasia at the Kimmel Cultural Campus' Merriam Theater, visit: [CLICK HERE!](#)

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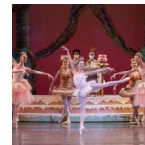
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