



Marcovicci & Maguire Go Over Reprise's *Rainbow*, Sept. 24-28

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Currently playing, through Sept. 28, is *Finian's Rainbow*, Burton Lane & Yip Harburg's musical fable, featuring cabaret artist Andrea Marcovicci. Keith Carradine (*Will Rogers Follies*) and Ned Beatty had also been scheduled but bowed out of their roles months earlier due to prior commitments. William Biff Maguire now plays Finian. Also in the cast are Malcolm Gets (Og), Rex Smith (Woody), Kevin Cooney, Jeff Coopwood, Cleo King, Robert Mandan, Dana Stackpole, Wendee Bresee, Ira Denmark, Melissa Fahn, Robert Barry Fleming, K.W. Miller, Carol Schuberg, Licia Shearer, Timothy Smith, Melanie Taylor, Marvin Thornton and Elex Lee Vann.

Will MacKenzie is directing the staging; with Janet Watson serving as choreographer. Jerome Kass and Will MacKenzie have adapted the Yip Harburg/Fred Saidy book for the concert staging, which has new orchestrations by Peter Matz.

Rainbow tells of an Irish leprechaun confronting the bigotry of a small town. Songs include "How Are Things In Glocca Morra?," "Look To The Rainbow," and "Old Devil Moon." (Sept. 24-28).

The next show will be *Wonderful Town*, the Leonard Bernstein, Fields & Chodorov and Comden & Green musical comedy, starring Tyne Daly (*Gypsy*). No other casting has been announced. This 1953 Tony-winning show is based on Ruth McKenney's stories, which served as the basis for the Fields & Chodorov play, *My Sister Eileen*. (Nov. 19-23).

Supporting roles have yet to be announced for the musicals, which will feature music direction by Peter Matz. Matz, an Emmy-winner for his work on two classic Barbara Streisand TV specials, began his career writing orchestrations, arrangements and dance music for Harold Arlen's *House Of Flowers* and *Jamaica*. Other Broadway efforts included arrangements on *No Strings* and *Hallelujah, Baby!*. Matz told the Los Angeles Times he plans to use 8 instrumentalists for *Promises, Promises*, playing "the main parts of the original orchestration, with some electronic augmentation on keyboards." In the fall, he hopes to use 14 or 15 musicians and an all-acoustic sound for *Finian's Rainbow*, and a 12-piece jazz band for *Wonderful Town*.

Said producing artistic director Marcia Seligson of "Reprise!: Bro *Best In Concert," "I have had a passion for Broadway musicals my entire life, but many of the classics I have loved and wanted to experience again have not been revived...because of the huge expense involved. Following the lead of the very successful Encores! Series in New York, we are creating a theatre company in Los Angeles to bring these wonderful shows to life again. In Southern California, there is a vast pool of film and television actors with musical theatre backgrounds who would love to perform in these shows, but their schedules will not permit a long run or tour. Reprise! will fill the need for these performers."

"We are also committed to creating a new, young audience for musicals," Seligson said, "[and] for the future, we also intend to give a voice to new musical theatre writers and composers by showcasing new shows and works in progress."

Productions will be "semi-staged," Seligson told Don Shirley of the L.A. Times, "not a nightclub act or a revue." At least some of the actors will carry scripts, but they'll also move around the stage. They'll wear costumes, but there will be no costume changes. Dance numbers will be choreographed, and there'll be some scenery, but it will be "simple and pared down."

For tickets (\$35-\$40) to Reprise! shows, held at the UCLA-Freud Playhouse, call (310) 825-2101.

--By David Lefkowitz