

‘THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF’

BRIDGES MUSICAL THEATRE – JUNE 2026

‘The ‘Great British Bake Off’ premiered at the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham on July 23rd 2022. It transferred to the Noel Coward Theatre in the West End in February 2023 and had short runs and mixed reviews.

I wasn’t sure what to expect or quite how a musical could evolve from the original TV series but it appeared to be the perfect medium for a story which follows the contestants and judges’ journeys in a blend of comedy and heart. I was delighted to have a most entertaining evening at The Playhouse last Saturday evening. The individual stories unfolded with humour and pathos and the music was foot-tapping and catchy.

The set was excellent. The work stations in pastel colours were equipped with all of the cooking implements, from food mixers to the humble wooden spoon and really resembled the TV programme. Well done set design and properties teams! The back projections served well to change the venue when necessary. Loved the Blackpool Tower one!

There was quite a lot of resetting of the work benches, stools etc and it was done quickly and quietly by the onstage and backstage crew. The backcloth of a dresser and bunting helped to set the scene in the kitchen.

As Izzy, the self-absorbed, over confident Cambridge student Heather Rogerson gave a strong performance. The change in her attitude near the end of the show displayed that she accepted how badly she had behaved and that she had some humility after all!

Lucy Curtis had the fun role of Babs and she played it brilliantly. She clearly enjoyed the sauciness of her character and made the most of her catch phrase, ‘and that was not a euphemism!’. I enjoyed ‘Bab’s Lament’ very much and her costumes were perfect for her big personality.

Another super performance was from Jen Shaw-Powell as Gemma. Her diction is first-rate and her slowly developing relationship with Ben was sensitively handled.

Wes Wooden played the role of Ben sympathetically, with just the right amount of reticence. They were both shy individuals until Gemma made the first move and then the relationship flourished. Much to the delight of Lily.

It was Phoebe Rung who played his daughter Lily on Saturday evening and she has a great deal of talent. Her diction is good, not too fast, and she acted with an experience beyond her years. Her song with Ben, 'My Dad' was just lovely.

Dawn Sainsbury was excellent as Francesca and with a most credible accent – her story was such a sad one and her song 'Grow' was poignant.

Dezza had a penchant for loud coloured clothing and Spencer Cole played the part with great enthusiasm making himself a very likeable character.

Peter Gerbert acquitted himself well as Hassan, his first speaking role I understand and he appeared confident.

Another fun role was Russell and Rob Franck clearly enjoyed putting across the gay character with exuberance.

Faith Powell looked every inch the well-known judge and as Pam Lee she was first rate. It is a big character to play and the costume department had done superbly dressing her in the style of clothes we expected of her. A glittery crash helmet was the finishing touch! She put across 'Keep on Keeping On' strongly. 'I'd Never Be Me Without You' with Phil was fun and sounded almost like a Cole Porter number.

Dan Curtis was very good as the male judge, Phil Hollinghurst, casually superior in his important position – he and Faith worked really well together bouncing off each other with their comedic remarks and friendly banter.

There was great attention to detail in every area of the show – I liked the Breton striped tops and red berets/kerchiefs worn by the two couples who came on to dance. It was good to see the Bake Off crew being involved so much and that they had their own number with movement and joined with Pam a couple of times. This was a difficult show to be able to include much choreography due to the lack of space on stage, but all of the movements with kitchen tools etc; were part of the choreography and the cast were well practised in them.

Prim and Kim played by Victoria Scott and Laura O'Hara respectively looked very glamorous and were essentially the link between the happenings in the story. They both gave good performances. They wore some striking costumes – I particularly liked Kim's red jump suit.

The Paris finale was great.

Musical Director Guy Bunce had worked very hard to teach unfamiliar music (although I bet it wasn't as difficult to teach as Sondheim!) and the harmonies were delightful. He controlled the musicians and the volume well so that the vocalists were not overpowered and could be heard properly.

The Stage Director- Amy Rommer and her Assistant Director Gail Thomas produced a super show and must have been delighted with the final results. They were brave enough to take on something unknown and made a real success of it.

I've made a note that says 'Blue Eyed Baker' was a 'raunchy belter' and I obviously enjoyed it! You'll have to decide which that was as I can't find one with that name in the programme! I think maybe Pam was singing about Phil??

Costumes were exceptionally good and all appropriate for the characters they were depicting. Well done Alina Shaw.

Lighting and Sound were good.

Your programme has all the necessary information - although it helps to have the names of cast who sang the number alongside - and is easy to negotiate. It's good to have photos of every cast member too. Where would we be without strong chorus support.

Thank you for inviting me to see 'The Great British Bake Off' and for your hospitality on the evening.

Enjoy the Summer (cooler than at present I hope!) and I'll see you at panto-time!

E. Gloria Smith

NODA SE Regional Representative - District 12