

UWM's Talent on Display in 'No, No, Nanette'

No, No, Nanette originates from the antiquated musical theater of the 1920s. At that time, big performance numbers typically involved a dozen people dancing in synchronized choreography with little regard for true human emotion.

The UW-Milwaukee Theatre Department brought that musical era to the stage in a flashy spectacle that ran for just a few performances before disappearing into the shadows of a fading school year.

It's remarkable how much bigger a production feels when it features a large cast performing a choreographed number. The budget may not have been immense, but the people onstage made the show seem absolutely extravagant. The work of scenic designer Kurt Sharp, as well as particularly impressive costuming by Jeffrey Lieder, gave the show a flashy Jazz Age sparkle.

Not every detail was executed with brilliance, but UWM's large, ambitious productions like *Nanette* have enough polish to place them on par with most theater companies in town. Some real potential popped out of the cast as well. A diminutive beauty with a golden voice, Sydney Mei Ruf-Wong showed considerable charm in the role of the young ingénue Nanette. Anna Fraser was equally sparkling as Lucille, the vivacious wife of a lawyer played by Micah Wallace. Wallace shared many of the virtues of a young Danny Kaye. It's always interesting to see that kind of talent in its infancy—another reason why UWM shows are so appealing.

The UWM Theatre Department's production of *No, No, Nanette* closed its current season. UWM's 2011-2012 season opens in October with Shirley Lauro's *A Piece of My Heart*. For more information, visit <http://arts.uwm.edu/theatre>.