

# PLAYBILL

**Theater/ Dance Teen Reviewers and Critics**

**A Teenage Collection of Artistic Critiques**



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FALL WINTER SEMESTER 25-26

**CAST...**

Tiffany  
Barrett

..... seen as TRaC Director

Zack      Anna      Asari Okata-  
Leitner      Block      Harrison

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..... seen as

**Junior  
Impresario**

Page 4

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..... seen as

**A.P. Master  
Scholar**

Pages 5 & 6

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..... seen as

**Booked Out  
Leading Man**

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# CAST BIOS



## Zack Leitner

Zack is a returning TRaC member who spent his first semester participating in Theater/Dance TRaC. His favorite show of the semester was "This World of Tomorrow."



## Anna Block

A vibrant HS Jr and a seasoned theatergoer this is Anna's first semester of TRaC. Anna's claim to fame is being the only student to see the Alvin Ailey concert.



## Asari Okata-Harrison

A seasoned actor and HS sophomore, this is Asari's first TRaC experience. Asari is the only student that was actively working towards a theatre role this semester.



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A-38 TV GUIDE

# THIS WORLD OF TOMORROW...

*This World of Tomorrow*, currently playing at The Shed in New York City, is an evocative tale that bends time in order to capture a beautiful, unfolding love story. First premiered in 2023, *This World of Tomorrow* takes its audience on an emotional ride, immersing viewers within the plot. To understand the full picture of *This World of Tomorrow*, one must analyze the theater in which it is performed.

The Shed, in Manhattan's Hudson Yards, plays a significant role within the show itself. *This World of Tomorrow* is centered around innovation, production, and progress. The modern, movable set of The Shed grounds the story and further engages the audience. For many (myself included), entering The Shed within Hudson Yards feels like taking a leap into the future. The entire experience of walking into the venue plunges the audience right into the performance. This is due to the purposeful design choices of the crew, the pins and pamphlets handed out, and the illustrative set on stage. Amidst all of this, the audience is standing in a structure that embodies modernism and futuristic architecture; all the while being a few blocks away from New York's most influential art deco designs of the 1930s (such as the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings.)

While The Shed is a fundamental piece of *This World of Tomorrow*, one can argue that its cold and anti-nostalgic nature holds the show back. The Shed certainly does not have the same cozy, homey feel as other theaters in New York City. Regardless, the theater encapsulates the themes of the performance perfectly. Bert Allenberry, the lead role played by Tom Hanks, is a simple man wrestling with the contrast between the futuristic world he has always known and the world of the past. It takes Allenberry time to discover whether human progress has really changed the world for the better. He grapples with his emotions in order to assess whether the modern-world is what he really wants; this parallels the audience's experience entering a literal "world of tomorrow." The Shed.

*This World of Tomorrow* centers on Allenberry, a time-traveler from the future, and his blatant obsession with discovering the past. Allenberry travels back to 1930s New York City in order to "spend a day at the World's Fair." While clearly fictional, *This World of Tomorrow* illustrates The New York World's Fair, and America during the 1930s in a largely historically accurate way. Allenberry discovers something deeper throughout his experience at the World's Fair. He is fascinated by the human promise that the future entails a better humanity for all, mostly driven by technology.

Much of *This World of Tomorrow* is up to each person's own interpretation, which may be a driving factor for the mixed feedback it has received. The audience is justified to believe that Bert Allenberry's reasoning for consistently traveling back to 1939 has to do with his love for Carmen, a woman he encounters at the Fair. However, I believe that Allenberry's fixation on traveling to the past is more about the discomfort and dissatisfaction with the lack of humanity he sustains in his own lifetime. Allenberry even describes Carmen as a perfect embodiment of 1930s American women. My perception of *This World of Tomorrow* is that it is less about an ordinary love story, but instead something much more profound.

This play touches upon extremely complex ideas in a way that is subtle, yet at the same time obvious to those viewing it through the right lens. I was extremely surprised after I left *This World of Tomorrow* and was still thinking about its core concepts days later. I would be challenged to dive into all of the underlying themes in *This World of Tomorrow* in a single review. However, I think the end of the play sums up the main point perfectly: Allenberry decides to sacrifice everything and leave his entire world behind. He discovers that no matter how advanced human achievements become, comfort and pure satisfaction is found in common, everyday human interactions. As an ordinary simpleton himself, he is happiest in a crummy apartment in The Bronx, a taxi cab, or even a Greek Diner in downtown Manhattan. Time travel, technological innovation, and the future will never be as exciting as the thrill of human connection, at least not to Bert Allenberry.

It is understandable why *This World of Tomorrow* is not appreciated by all who went to see it. With a 74% review on *Show Score*, it does have generally positive feedback. However, looking closer at the dichotomy between positive and negative reviews, and the lack of mixed/neutral reviews, something becomes abundantly clear. Whether good or bad, *This World of Tomorrow* leaves a clear impression on the audience. Some greatly criticize the acting, which I struggle to understand as the performances by Tom Hanks and Kelli O'Hara were some of the best acting I have ever seen. Others wrote critiques, accusing the show of "over-relying" on a simple, and boring character. Some even claim that the big ideas presented in the play were held back by the absence of theatrical effects.

To be fair to the criticisms, the show was carried by its dialogue. While there were some creative set designs, the show's lighting, sound, and effects were not memorable. However, to enjoy *This World of Tomorrow*, one must understand that impactful stories don't need a superhero or an evil mastermind villain. Magical powers, dramatized plots, intense special effects, and idolized characters are not essential to complete or successful storytelling. The simple, relatable, and fragile characters are what keeps the viewers invested in the performance; without these aspects, the sincere and thoughtful nature of the show that I grew to love would have been detrimentally impaired. This *World of Tomorrow* is a misunderstood masterpiece that has the power to change viewers' lives, only if they are ready to view it through an open lens and give it time to resonate.

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# THIS WORLD OF TOMORROW...

World Of Tomorrow review

By: Anna Block

"You have seen the future!" Is one of the main quotes from the new off Broadway show, World of Tomorrow, starring Tom Hanks and Kelli O'Hara.

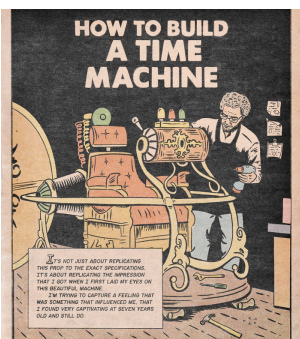
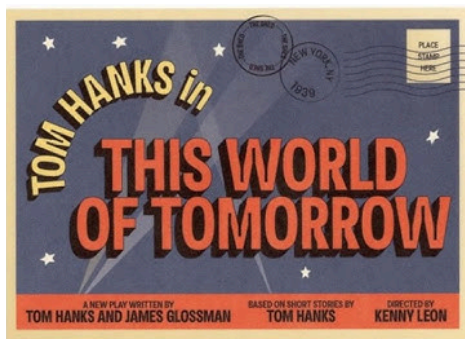
World Of Tomorrow centers around a businessman named Bert Allenberry (Tom Hanks) from the year 2086 who travels back in time to 1939. In 1939, he attends the 1939 New York's World Fair where he met Carmen Perry (Kelli O'Hara) and her niece, Virginia Perry (Kayli Carter). He falls in love with Carmen, and through most of the show Bert attempts to travel back in time to be with her; until he succeeds in the very end.

World Of Tomorrow is romantic to say the least. It serves as a beautiful love story that even contains two lessons. Lesson one centers around how love is a special bond that will always exist when you find your person.

At the end of the day, you should do everything within your power to make sure you are with the person you love. Lesson two is more nuanced, it's a lesson that we should pay attention to the past. While we cannot change what has occurred in the past; we can learn from it and change our futures.

Beyond the magic of the story, the play itself was magical. The costumes for instance really pulled the audience into the story, due to how historically accurate they were for the late 1930s. The set was creative, making the best of the items they had. It brought us in 2025 to both Kansas in 2086 and New York City in 1939. The acting was superb, reflecting how well the director handled the cast and chose to run the show.

Overall, the show was well produced, funny, and worth seeing. As an audience member, I felt as though I was really part of all the drama. I was transported from the world to the show and made to feel as though it was real. I was made to laugh, smile, get scared for the characters, and all around have a great time.



# CASTRO IN CONTROL OF CUBA

## President Urrutia declares general strike

FROM ALSTAIR COOKE

NEW YORK, JANUARY 2.

All of Cuba to-day was under the precarious control of Fidel Castro, the 31-year-old rebel whom the Batista Government pictured to its graceless end as a ragamuffin hiding in the scrub hills of Oriente Province.

Castro to-day chose his birthplace, Santiago de Cuba, as provisional capital until such time as he could safely install in the Presidential palace at Havana the man he has proclaimed provisional President.

He is Manuel Urrutia Lleo, a 58-year-old judge unknown to fame until, after 31 years on the bench, he faced last year 150 youths charged with inciting to revolt. He set them free on the brave principle that the Batista Government had left Cubans no peaceful means to defend their constitutional rights.

### Curb on rioting

He became a revolutionary hero and to-day he has his reward. His first act was to declare a general strike so as to curb the rioting and to demonstrate, through the patrols of the revolutionary militia, that Castro is indeed the Government in fact.

The Batista Government and most of its lackeys are already in the United States or in one of several Caribbean havens. A plane load of 60 of them landed at Idlewild last night and a Cuban merchant ship sailed for the Dominican Republic, where Batista is safe in the embrace of his former ward and enemy, the dictator Trujillo.

The last act of Batista's abortive junta was to tell the Government troops to lay down their arms. They appear to have done so, but Castro broadcast to-day an order to his forces everywhere to go armed and fire on sight at all looters, agitators, and pockets of resistance.

Most Cubans, and certainly the onlooking dictators of Nicaragua,

sent to wipe out the rebels were "soldiers of the rural guard who were not prepared for guerrilla warfare. When the rebels extended their operations and met the army in open battle they were well armed and their weapons were superior to ours."

The last excuse is doubled by Latin American experts and business men here, who say that up to the end Batista was receiving planes and arms from Big Powers. What doomed him, they agree, was the treachery of his own leaders, widespread desertions in the army, and the final dash for safety of men bound to him only by

Late this afternoon one of Castro's lieutenants took over the Havana remnants of this faithless army and passed the cue to Castro to begin his triumphal entry into the capital city. If he subdued it without much bloodshed he must quickly repair the heavy damage to the railroads, highways, and sugar farms in three provinces



# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

## Buena Vista Social Club Critique

By: Anna Block

**Buena Vista Social club is an overall vibrant musical adaptation of the 1999 documentary by the same name.**

**The musical centers around Omara Portuondo and her rise**

**to fame in Cuba around the time of the 1959 Cuban**

**Revolution, and her life in Cuba during the late 1990s.**

**Buena Vista Social Club's costume department certainly managed to get all of the detailing right in the costumes.**

**The costumes not only were incredibly accurate to the time period(s), but they also displayed the differences in social classes, the pre vs pro communist eras, and even told a story. The more conservatively dressed Haydee for example, showed how on edge she was with the looming**

**threat of Fidel Castro's inevitable takeover. While Omara,**

**who was dressed less conservatively, and often with brighter colors, showed how carefree she was despite the**

**threats of Castro's takeover.**

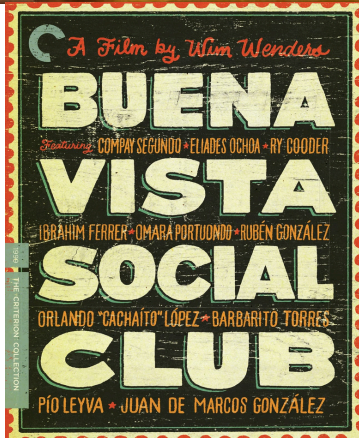
**Besides the costumes, the set was also well designed. It fit the theme, the story, and the time period. The set design department really knew how to design a set that was visually appealing and also made sense for the musical.**

**The dancing also helped tell a story, and even in one scene helped serve as a visual onto Omara's mind. The singing managed to add some realism to the show, as it was all in Spanish. The singing added to the fact that it was a true story, and it was impressive to hear.**

**The acting was well done for the most parts, though there were times where the actress of younger Omara fell flat.**

**Similarly, there were times where the storyline fell flat. At times, it felt as though there were questions about the storyline that remained unanswered, especially with what happened to Omara and Haydee's parents and the backstories of two of the main male leads. Sometimes it felt as though the show was about to address questions, though it never did, at times making the show harder to follow. In general the show seemed to focus more on the singing, set, costumes, and dancing than the storyline.**

**Overall, Buena Vista Social Club is one of the most enjoyable and well done shows on Broadway.**







**THANK YOU!**