



# [Stanford Daily Archive](#)

- [Archive](#)

## 'A Chorus Line' prepares to invade MemAud

### [John Huetter](#)



April 12th, 2001 by John Huetter

I was a little worried going in to review the Ram's Head Theatrical Society's new spring show, "A Chorus Line." Student critiques of Stanford shows tend to resemble those of critics who come out of film screenings with commentary like, "Feel good movie of the decade!"

The Stanford critic, not wishing to offend his friends in the show, usually deducts a star to prove he's not biased and then proceeds to give the show a gushing review. But what would I do if the play was a disaster?

I had visions of myself as Jed Leland in "Citizen Kane," drinking myself into a stupor while wrestling between critic's integrity and writing the good review expected by everybody. Luckily, the show was excellent. My liver and I are both very relieved.

"A Chorus Line" presents a series of scenes featuring aspiring dancers. They alternate between practicing routines and being grilled by an unseen director akin to God talking to Charlton Heston (concealed with his back to the audience, he is reminiscent of Dr. Claw from "Inspector Gadget").

Out of the anonymity integral to the Broadway chorus line emerges each character's individual story. When all the stories are told, the show is done.

The rehearsal I saw was understandably rough, being that it was the first show with orchestral accompaniment and one of the first dress rehearsals. The spotlights were absent — their operators trapped in I-Hum sections (another reason to hate Area One) — and the infamous mirrors (which would suggest a dance studio) were still being adjusted, so they tended to distort the actors into fun-house reflections.

The cast was great, injecting emotion into its song and dance as well as its book lines, a feat that many musical troupes fail to achieve. Galen Davis, as the phantom director Zach, delivers a quality performance: His voice, the key to his unseen character, is booming cool. The guy ought to intone, "This is CNN," when James Earl Jones's contract runs out.

Rebecca Whitehurst, as Cassie, has one of the most emotional parts in the show; her "The Music and the Mirror" is dynamite. (She and Davis also managed a flawless ad lib while patiently waiting for an actor who had missed an entrance; I wouldn't have even caught it had the director, Alicia McCann, not tipped me off.)

Sarah Price does a fine job as Sheila in going from sultry seductress to caustic bitch to wounded daughter, and Sean Fenton's timid homosexual Paul is excellent. His body language is superb, his character ringing truest of them all: His pain and confusion is palpable all the way back to the cheap seats.

Kateri McRae's nasally, scatter-brained Kristine is a riot. And Adryon Burton as Bebe, limited to one-third of the "At the Ballet" trio, catches one's attention as well. (I'm not sure why — must be the "personal flair" her character sings about, but in a good way.)

The character of Morales, who sings just two solo songs, is generally forgotten in the wake of the more flamboyant leads of Val, Cassie and Sheila. No one can overlook her here, because Esther Cohen has an incredible voice that fills Memorial Auditorium and makes it easy to forget there's only one person doing all the singing.

But where this group truly shines is in their dance numbers, during which the cast's tentativity and uneasiness with vocals, lines and body microphones disappears. Choreographer Rhiannon Meier is to be commended.

"What do you do when you can't dance anymore?" Zach asks.

"I'd probably kill myself!" Bebe exclaims.

This cast makes you understand this statement.

The stage crew made finagling 17 body microphones and a complicated light plot look easy. Kudos to light and sound designers Andrew Reid and Gabe Cronin, and especially to technical director Megan Fuller-Deets, producer Jiny Kim and stage manager Rachel Meisels, for organizing a very technically complex show. And, of course, to McCann, who had to do the same and still found time and sanity to block and coach 28 actors in a terrific show.

"Nothing runs forever," notes one character. "A Chorus Line" nearly did, being the second-longest-running Broadway musical of all time. After seeing it here, you'll know why.

To meet my deadline, I saw the production when it was a diamond in the rough, but the gem within already sparkled very brightly indeed. I eagerly await the faceted, polished stone presented opening night (tomorrow), and you should too.



 [News](#)

You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. Both comments and pings are currently closed.

### **No Responses to "A Chorus Line' prepares to invade MemAud"**

Comments are closed.

Breaking news from the Farm since 1892

Developed by [Siolon](#)