

British Theatre Guide

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For The Lack of Laura

Kurt Rosenberg
Morgan Brothers
Shaw Theatre
24 July–2 August 2025

Award-winning composer Kurt Rosenberg's debut musical *For The Lack of Laura* has its London première following a short run at Forum Theatre, Malvern.

The show's fantasy story is a charming idea with a lot of possibility. In ancient Ireland, Laura is a young woman in search of true love. Malevolent hex Gwendolethe bestows immortality on her together with the ability to travel through time and place in order to find the man of her dreams. But this is more a curse than a gift. Once Laura has given herself in love, she will become mortal, and her lover will take on immortality repeating the cycle.

Sadly, I cannot say that the immense potential on offer is realised.

Rosenberg's music is pleasing enough. It is played by a satisfyingly large band, except for the lush overture which is, bizarrely, a recording that accompanies projected credits hinting at something cinematic to follow.

The orchestrations are inflected with pipes but not to an offensive degree, and it is easy to see where the pastiche numbers set in Spain and France are aiming for comedy as well as geographical recognition under Rosenberg's trowel.

I could say fortunately the music often swamps the singers, however that would be mean; nonetheless, the songs are dogged by lyrics where banality beats bad rhyming in a race to the bottom.

The biggest burden for this show is its chronically poor book. It reads as if it was written at twice the length and edited down to its present 140 minutes by xenophobic AI with a hatchet.

In the first act, Laura's travels take her into the arms of five love interests—a lothario matador in 1900 Madrid, an angry playwright in 1920s New Orleans, a Parisian Impressionist painter mid-*crise existentielle*, a narcissistic dancer at Moscow's Bolshoi in 1895 and a reserved present-day vicar nestled in the English countryside.

In the second act, Laura seems impelled to choose between them—it feels regressive. Why, if she has immortality, does she have to settle for one of these flawed, loveless options? Why indeed does Gwendolethe sing of them being left bereft by Laura when the book reflects nothing of the sort? I spare you the full list of incongruities.

Rosenberg's incoherent narrative plays out on the too-bare stage of the Shaw Theatre. The rocky escarpment doesn't dominate the space, but being mis-sized forces the performers into the wings

and out again mid-lyric. It begs the question couldn't director Luke Morgan have re-blocked this handful of passages?

Jane Patterson as Laura has a lovely voice but delivers the songs with insufficient gumption, so best friend Emma Daly's Maggie, who has something of a comic subplot, leads with personality whilst Mo Thiesenhusen's panto villain Gwendolene injects energy if not peril into her scenes.

They are each limited by what they have to work with, and as book writer, composer and lyricist, that starts and ends with the Celtic-obsessed American Rosenberg.

With all of time and our entire planet to play with, he has taken a shamefully stunted view. By his standards, one could be forgiven for thinking that there is no industry except the arts, no history older than 1880 and no culture outside of the West.

Never mind Laura, Rosenberg needs to do some travelling.

Reviewer: [Sandra Giorgetti](#)