

SUMMARY JUDGMENTS

REVIEWS, REVIEWS, REVIEWS!

A Great Year for the Bar Show



**Much to Sue About Nothing:
The 2017 Bar Show**



Reviewed by Adam Sheppard

The 94th annual Bar Show was one of the best in recent years. At a time when our country needs to be able to laugh at itself, the Bar Show delivered. Naturally, there was a heavy dose of President Trump—comedy gold for political satirists. See e.g., “Hello Donald” (sung to “Hello Dolly”) or “Donald/Gatson” (sung to “Gaston” from *Beauty and the Beast*). As cast member, Carissa Meyer, noted: “Much of the fodder for this year’s show came straight from the President himself. The writing team did a fantastic job of trying to include other stories and individuals

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from throughout the year. But, honestly, the difference in the Bar Show this year is that Donald Trump is the President of the United States.”

The show also hit on all of the regulars, e.g., “Another year we’ll make fun of Rahm. And rip our sports teams, they usually bomb.” (Sung to “Another Op’nin’, Another Show” from *Kiss Me Kate*). The Royal Family was not immune—Prince Charles mourned the loss of his kingship in a parody of “The King of Broadway” (*The Producers*).

National politicians received the most attention. Robert Mueller sang to his targets in “So Indicted” (a parody of the Pointer Sisters’ “I’m So Excited”). Departed Trump administration officials—Comey, Bannon, Spicer, Scaramucci—delineated their respective mishaps in *Cell Block Tango* (*Chicago*): “Loyalty, Breitbart, Bushes, Mooch.” The show poked fun at Ivanka in “Gotta Get A Gimmick” (from *Gypsy*). In “To Leaks” (sung to “To Life,” *Fiddler on the Roof*) Donald Trump, Jr. and the President colluded with the Russians to use Wikileaks.

This year’s show was special because “it tackled normally untouchable or uncomfortable subjects,” said cast member, Jacqueline Carroll. In “Womb Where It Happens” (sung to “Room Where it Happens”)

pregnant women lamented an all-male Congressional meeting on contraception. In “You Will be Heard” (instead of “You Will Be Found” from *Dear Evan Hansen*), a chorus reassured a concerned citizen that his voice would be heard even in this divisive political climate. Women who spoke out this year “roared” in a parody of Katy Perry’s empowerment anthem.

The show also mimicked more trivial issues. “Forgotten Sisters”—Tiffany Trump, Kourtney Kardashian, and Pippa Middleton—sang of their plight in a parody of “The Schuyler Sisters” (*Hamilton*) (the show used multiple *Hamilton* songs—rightfully so). In “Can’t Stop the Snoring” (sung to Justin Timberlake’s “Can’t Stop the Feeling”), dancing salespeople praised a Zyppah, an anti-snoring product.

This year’s staging was particularly clever. A giant Twitter screen served as the backdrop. Real time, pseudo-presidential, tweets appeared on the screen throughout the show. In “Twitter” (a parody of Michael Jackson’s “Thriller”), the performers showcased their dancing skills.

The Show had its usual dose of lawyer-themed numbers. A senior partner at a personal injury firm encouraged a young associate to be creative in detecting a “Duty and a Breach” (sung to “Beauty and the Beast”).

As the show’s title suggests, the “book” for this year’s show was Shakespearean themed. For example, when Robert Mueller cautioned of “something rotten in Denmark,” Hamlet responded, “I know, right—I’ve been saying that for centuries.” Naturally, Fred Lane and Joe Stone did their vaudeville act. This year, Joe interviewed a futuristic Fred, dressed like an astronaut, who described a bleak future (seemingly due to global warming).

There were many more fantastic numbers. The Bar Show’s famed encore, “Junior Partners,” even included new lines. The creators, cast, and crew did a magical job of interweaving cutting edge news stories with catchy songs and traditional themes. If you missed the show, make sure that next year, you are in the “Room Where it Happens.” ■