



The Round Barn Theatre ®  
Amish Acres ®

**Review**

***Legally Blonde***

2017

The Round Barn Theatre

Amish Acres

Nappanee, Indiana

By Frank Ramirez

Senior Pastor

Union Center Church of the Brethren

## **Kristen Brintnall IS Elle Woods in Legally Blonde**

And she persisted....

Elle Woods failed to win the hand of the man she adored. She failed to measure up the standards of Harvard Law School. She failed to make a good impression the first day of classes. She failed to do the smart thing to insure future success as a lawyer. She believed she failed herself.

Still, she persisted!

“Legally Blonde,” playing at the Round Barn Theatre at Amish Acres in Nappanee, subtly suggests there are no “safe” prejudices, no populations you can get away with turning them into caricatures. Every individual ought to be judged not by the color of their skin -- or hair -- but by the quality of their character.

Kristen Brintnall navigates a tricky course through Elle’s own self-imposed preconceptions of what is important or even possible in life. Brintnall’s Elle may at first seem shallow but over the course of the show she draws out a character with far more depth that Elle gives herself credit for.

Ryan Schisler has a daunting task in this show as Warner Huntington III but he’s up to it. As the villain of the piece he avoids the easy path of caricature by embracing future career goals that preclude Elle. Schisler’s portrait is by turns likeable but never lovable.

It is an axiom of acting that you should never share the stage with animals, but Oxford, who plays the role of Bruiser, is charming and a team player. As to whether Oxford is a diva off-stage who can say? He is not alone, however, with regards to canine casting.

I like the look of this show, including Ashley Alverth's costume design, and the clever way the Richard Pletcher's set pieces act as transformers, becoming by turn a dorm room, a court room, and a beauty parlor. Most impressive is the brisk pace set by director Mike Fielder. This show never lags. It moves briskly from scene to scene and song to song, without losing sense. The efficient scene changes also contribute to the effect. That's important, because this is a fun show.

It's also a large cast production, which fills the Round Barn stage with cleverly choreographed numbers.

Character transformation is key to good theater. Vivienne Kensington believably grows the character of Lauren Morgan, the "serious" alternative for Warner's upward climb, into a more self-aware proponent for Elle. Ian Connor's driven Emmett Forrest, who has known want, is able to unlock his will to succeed to include the possibility of personal fulfillment and love.

I hadn't heard this musical before I attended the Round Barn production, but I enjoyed the music and never felt puzzled about what each song was trying to accomplish as sometimes happens in a first viewing. Kudos to the cast for making each song from beginning to end come alive. My favorite numbers, I must admit, were "Ireland" and its reprise, wonderfully sung by Katherine Barnes in the marvelous pull-up-your-big-girl-panties role of Paulette Buonufonte.

Special shout out to Martin Flowers who plays God's Gift To Women twice, portraying both sides of the coin as Dewey and Kyle, to great comic effect.

"Legally Blonde" is a You Go Girl musical that demonstrates that life ought to be a meritocracy. You'll cheer for Kirsten Brintnall as Elle Woods because despite her travails, she persists.

And she prevails.

The Round Barn Theatre at Amish Acres presents "Legally Blonde," Book by Heather Hach, Music and Lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe and Neil Benjamin, based on the novel by Amanda Brown and the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer motion picture, through July 16. For reservations and information call 800-800-4942 or go to [www.amishacres.com](http://www.amishacres.com).