

SOMETHING TO SHOUT ABOUT.



Danielle Plisz, from left, Amy Steele, Maggie Portman, Megan Long and Lauren Fijol play swinging 1960s scenesters in "Shout! The Mod Musical" running at Chicago's Drury Lane Water Tower Place.

# Groovy ode to '60s

*New musical should play well to summer tourist crowd*

BY BARBARA VITELLO

DAILY HERALD CRITIC AT LARGE  
 bvitello@dailyherald.com

And the award for hardest working ensemble goes to ... the women of "Shout! The Mod Musical," off-Broadway's musical salute to swingin' '60s London and the gals who made it groovy.

With their brassy and well-matched (if decidedly uniform) voices, these vivacious belters give their all to peppy pop tunes and sugary ballads like "Downtown," "I Know a Place" and "To Sir, With Love."

Sweet as cotton candy and about as filling, the show by Phillip George and David Lowenstein strings together songs made famous by British song-birds including Dusty Springfield, Lulu and Petula Clark, whose tunes make up the lion's share of the prefab score.

The show centers around five women, each defined by a color and representing a different type, negotiating their way through The Sixties' social and sexual upheavals.

Lauren Fijol (using her Bordeaux voice wonderfully on "Don't Sleep in the Subway") plays the posh Blue Girl, who wears a Mary Quant dress and sports a Vidal Sassoon bob.

Megan Long (revving up the crowd with her rendition of "Those Were the Days") is the nerdy Red Girl, an aspiring singer who forgets the words.

Danielle Plisz channels Ann-Margaret

**"Shout!  
The Mod Musical"**

★ ★ ½  
out of four

**Location:** Drury Lane Water Tower Place, 175 E. Chestnut St., Chicago

**Times:** 7:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday; 8 p.m. Friday; 2, 6 and 9 p.m. Saturday; 2 and 6 p.m. Sunday through June 22 (but an extension is likely)

**Running Time:** About 90 minutes, no intermission

**Tickets:** \$45- \$55

**Parking:** \$7.50 at the adjacent Water Tower Place garage with box office validation

**Box office:** (312) 902-1400 or [broadwayinchicago.com](http://broadwayinchicago.com)

**Rating:** For adults, contains adult subject matter and language

as sex kitten Green Girl. Plisz, whose tour-de-force faux orgasm gives Meg Ryan's "When Harry Met Sally" performance a run for its money, also does a cheeky parody of Shirley Bassey's growly "Goldfinger," which paired with a vocal interpretation of the James Bond theme, makes for one of the show's most delicious moments.

Charismatic Maggie Portman plays the Yellow Girl, an American bird obsessed with Paul McCartney, whose

seductive "Son of a Preacher Man" features terrific doo-wop backing by the rest of the cast. Portman and the gals also do a little rafter shaking on the rousing "Shout."

Lastly, as the domestically inclined Orange Girl, pert Amy Steele does the heavy lifting vocally on such charmers as "Wishin' and Hopin'" and the torchy "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me."

Everything about it is big and bright. David Gallo's smashing set — with its bubble-gum shag carpeting and enormous, citrus-colored vinyl flowers — explodes with color that complements Phillip Heckman's vivid period costumes.

Director/choreographer Jay Falzone keeps the women frugging and twisting for the better part of the high-energy show. And the "Laugh-In" style black-outs by Peter Charles and Phillip George provide some chuckles. As musical snapshot of an era, this pop culture pastiche works.

The problem rests with the flimsy narrative that has the girls reading snippets from the fictional magazine "Shout!" to advance the story. The show fares best when it sticks to fashion, relationships and sex.

When it tries to get serious — as it does with an ill-conceived reference to domestic violence — it stumbles. And yet the undemanding "Shout!" (which will likely extend past its June closing once Mag Mile summer tourists discover it) makes for a tasty treat.