

Search:

Articles-last 7 days

for

Go

News | Business | Sports | Entertainment | Living | Classifieds | Jobs | Cars | Homes



- [Jobs](#) Search | List
- [Cars](#) Buy | Sell
- [Homes](#) Buy | Sell
- [Apts.](#) Search | List

[Back to Home >](#)

Wednesday, Mar 10, 2004

 email this
  print this

Posted on Wed, Feb. 18, 2004

## Actress Jibson makes touring 'Hairspray' production shine

BY DOMINIC P. PAPATOLA  
Pioneer Press

After seeing "Hairspray," you might never make fun of a chubby kid again.

There's just something about Carly Jibson, shaking her ample booty with unfettered joy for herself and all her similar-sized sisters that makes you smile. The 19-year-old actress plays Tracy Turnblad, the short-and-stout girl who just wants to dance on TV with all the popular kids, and she owns the touring production of "Hairspray" that touched down at Minneapolis' Orpheum Theatre.

The musical love letter to the 1960s, dancing and – yes – integration, is an ensemble effort, filled with infectious music and seam-busting zest. The story centers on Tracy, but in the Broadway production, audiences fell in love with the frog-voiced Harvey Fierstein, who played Tracy's much-larger-than-life mother, Edna.

On tour, the show belongs to Jibson. From the moment we see her – and that's the very first moment of the show, her hair sculpted up to ionospheric heights – we're rooting for her. And it's not the pity-the-fat-girl sympathy: Jibson brings such an irresistible enthusiasm and honesty to the role that she makes the pretty girls who sneer at her look plain ol' nasty.

She's got the right squeaky, girl-becoming-a-woman voice for the role, which is one of the qualities casting directors certainly looked for in the role. But Jibson brings an intangible sense of delight to the role – best manifested in that gleeful look-mom-I'm-dancing grin that lights up her whole face when she's at center stage.

Except for Jibson, the rest of this touring company is probably a half step less good than their Broadway counterparts. But that's more an observation than a criticism. This cast pushes at the material a bit too hard (and they weren't helped by an opening-night sound mix that was on the mushy side), but they're still a fun-loving group with enough contagious energy to warm up Duluth on a cold night.

Bruce Vilanch slips in to the 54 EEE bra-cups of Edna Turnblad for the tour. He's wearing a fat suit, a wig and enough makeup to choke Estee Lauder, but, like Fierstein, he doesn't make any effort to pitch his voice into a female register. Dressed like a super-sized piñata, Vilanch more has stage presence thrust upon him than actually creating it with his performance. But his is a good-natured and generous turn, one that's willing to share the spotlight with all the talent sharing the stage.

And there's talent to burn. Austin Miller, who looks uncannily like a younger version of Harry Connick Jr., makes a terrific hip-swiveling Link Larkin, the studmuffin who falls for Tracy. Sandra Denise geeks it up aplenty as Tracy's spastic buddy, Penny.

Terron Brooks brings winning charm and fast feet to the role of Seaweed, the boy from the other side of the racial tracks who helps Tracy get her groove, and Charlotte Crossley is positively bodacious as Seaweed's fully self-actualized mom, Motormouth Maybelle.

This review can't end without a tip to all the people in the chorus, who rocket the show through huge, unapologetically garish, rollicking ensemble numbers like "Welcome to the 60s" and "You Can't Stop the Beat." It's their hard work that really gets the audience moving in their seats. The leading players might provide the star wattage, but those hard-working youngsters who provide the raw energy that gets "Hairspray" off the ground.

Theater critic Dominic P. Papatola can be reached at [dpapatola@pioneerpress.com](mailto:dpapatola@pioneerpress.com) or at 651-228-2165.

## Sponsored Links

### [Duluth Minnesota Hotel](#)

Plan Your Trips with ORBITZ. Find Deals on Air, Hotel & Car. Book Now  
[www.ORBITZ.com](http://www.ORBITZ.com)

### [Duluth Minnesota Hotels](#)

Real Time Bookings Here! View Our Local Guide Here.  
[www.areaguides.net](http://www.areaguides.net)

### [Duluth Minnesota Parks](#)

Duluth and surrounding area web sites, maps and other cities.  
[www.ArsonD.com](http://www.ArsonD.com)

- Archives
- Classified Ads
- Contests
- Directions
- Newspaper Ads
- Obituaries
- Subscriptions
- Traffic Reports
- Weather
- Yellow Pages

## News

- Columnists
- Education
- Latest Headlines
- Local
- Minnesota
- Nation
- Opinion
- Politics
- Special Reports
- Weird News
- Wisconsin
- World

## Sports

- Columnists
- Gophers/College
- High School
- Outdoors
- Ski Conditions
- Twins/MLB
- Vikings/NFL
- Wild/NHL
- Wolves/NBA

## Business

- Columnists
- Personal Finance
- Technology

## Entertainment

- Columnists
- Art
- Celebrities
- Comics & Games
- Events
- Horoscopes
- Movies
- Music
- Onstage
- Restaurants
- TV & Radio

## Living

- Columnists
- Bulletin Board
- Faith
- Health
- Home & Garden
- Recipes

 email this
  print this

- **Travel**

- **Automotive**
- **Classified Ads**
- **Employment**
- **Personals**
- **Real Estate**
- **Shopping**
- **Yellow Pages**

- **Contests**
- **E-Discussion**
- **E-Newsletters**
- **Local Events**
- **Weblogs**

- **Daily Print Edition**
- **Pioneer Press PDFs**

- **Contact Lists**
- **Corrections**
- **FAQs**
- **Place an Ad**

### St. Paul Women's Expo

Enter to win free passes to the St. Paul Women's Expo, March 13 & 14.

- **Register to Win Passes to the Women's Expo**

### Win Tickets to The Ladykillers

Be one of the first to see the new Tom Hanks' film "The Ladykillers."

- **Register for Free Passes to the Ladykillers**

### Room to Move Contest

Enter the Room to Move contest, and you might become \$10,000 richer. Visit Apartments.com to register.

- **Enter the Room to Move Contest**

### Special Sections

- **What's On Sale**
- **Winter Carnival**
- **Parade of Homes**
- **Herberger's**
- **Gander Mountain**
- **Swoosh: Winter Recreation Guide**
- **Rental Showcase**
- **Doggy Showcase**
- **St. Paul Menu Guide**
- **More**

### TWINCITIES.COM PARTNERS

- **Worry Free Vacations**
- **Mystic Lake**



News | Business | Sports | Entertainment | Living | Classifieds | Jobs | Cars | Homes  
 About TwinCities.com | About the Real Cities Network | Terms of Use & Privacy Statement | About Knight Ridder | Copyright