

# Review: Andrew Lloyd Weber proves he can rock

 [lansingstatejournal.com/story/entertainment/arts/2018/09/20/review-andrew-lloyd-weber-proves-can-rock/37872251/](https://lansingstatejournal.com/story/entertainment/arts/2018/09/20/review-andrew-lloyd-weber-proves-can-rock/37872251/)

## Share This Story!

Let friends in your social network know what you are reading about



## Review: Andrew Lloyd Weber proves he can rock

“School of Rock” runs through Sunday, Sept. 23, at Wharton

## Sent!

A link has been sent to your friend's email address.

## Posted!

A link has been posted to your Facebook feed.

Bridgette Redman, For the Lansing State Journal Published 3:00 p.m. ET Sept. 20, 2018

“School of Rock” is at Wharton Center in East Lansing this week and it is a show that rocks out with electric guitars, basses, electronic keyboards and wild percussion sets. (Photo: Courtesy)

rock review3

## CONNECTTWEETLINKEDINEMAILMORE

Andrew Lloyd Weber has been holding out on us all these years.

Sure, he’s long since established his genius. One of the most commercially successful composers in history (at least according to The New York Times) who first started writing music at age 9 and had his first successful musical collaboration, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, when he was 19, Weber is the godfather of musicals.

But he gets associated with the giants of the trade—Phantom of the Opera, Cats, Jesus Christ Superstar, Evita and Sunset Boulevard.

It turns out, though, that Weber can do more than classical Broadway show tunes and Requiem masses.

Weber can rock.

And not just the calypso rock of “Joseph” or the ‘70s rock of “Jesus Christ Superstar,” but the bang your head and thrash your face rock of bands such as AC/DC or Led Zeppelin.

“School of Rock” is at Wharton Center in East Lansing this week and it is a show that rocks out with electric guitars, basses, electronic keyboards and wild percussion sets. In Weber’s story, though, the rockers are reluctant 9- and 10-year-olds, students at a prestigious private school where their parents spend \$50,000 a year to try to guarantee their places at Harvard or other Ivy League schools.

Their well-ordered life is disrupted with the entrance of Dewey, played by Rob Colletti. By most accounts, a loser and kind of a dirtbag, Dewey is a man who hasn’t grown up, an unlikely hero. His reasons for teaching the kids are purely selfish at first. This isn’t the tale of the altruistic teacher who is out to change the lives of his students or who has an idealistic outlook on children and education.

### **Read more:**

[Prepare for high energy with ‘School of Rock’](#)

[Prepare for high energy with ‘School of Rock’](#)

[‘Beautiful Music’ captures coming-of-age in ‘70s Detroit](#)

No, he’s selfish and in it for the money.

At least until he starts forming real relationships with the kids, relationships built through music and through the creation and performance of rock. He also finds talents in these kids that others failed to value, and by doing so, begins a process that has the potential to turn everyone’s lives around—if his web of lies isn’t discovered first.

And you’ll have to do a fair amount of suspension of disbelief and accept this as somewhat of a fairy tale. In the real world, there would be forms to fill out and IDs that would be checked and it would be impossible for Dewey to pull off what he does. But take this show as a fairy tale of rock and roll, and such plot holes can be forgiven.

While Colletti does a fantastic job of playing the overgrown rocker who can’t make his dreams come true, it’s really the kids who make this show. It’s a large collection of extremely talented children ages 9-11. As Weber informs the audience in a recorded announcement before the show, all the kids play their own instruments. It’s all real talent on display.

Mystic Inscho plays Zack who gets assigned the electric guitar, and boy, can the kid play. The guitar seems oversized for him, but he soon shows that he is its master and puts on a great show. Leanne Parks is Katie and while her performance on the bass is superlative, it is her emoting and rock star face that steals the show. She puts on her face and the world belongs to her. It is the perfect combination of bad ass and cute.

Grier Burke as Tomika does a lovely job of portraying a shy girl who has a lioness inside her waiting for the right moment to come out. Her vocal talents are outstanding and there is a moment in the play where she rattles the rafters and impresses the pants off the audience.

Sami Bray brings a wonderful confidence and arrogance to the role of Summer, a pushy

teacher's pet who is determined to be in charge and bring order to her world.

"School of Rock" is a show that is simply a lot of fun. It's cute, it's sweet and it rocks hard.

Suspend disbelief.

## To go

**When:** Sept. 18-23

**Tickets:** from \$35, [www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com)

CONNECTTWEETLINKEDINEMAILMORE

Read or Share this story: <https://on.lsj.com/2PTAxXn>

## From The USA TODAY NETWORK

These sites are part of the USA TODAY NETWORK. Their content is produced independently from our newsrooms.

## More Stories

- Audrey Dahlgren: From Potterville to St. Louis and back  
Sept. 28, 2018, 9:50 a.m.
- Don't be afraid to treat yourself this Halloween  
Oct. 3, 2018, 7 a.m.
- Detroit Tiger cap ready for its closeup  
Sept. 24, 2018, 7:33 a.m.
- Jane Fonda at 80: Analytic, apologetic  
Sept. 23, 2018, 7:16 a.m.
- New TV season draws heavily from past  
Sept. 22, 2018, 2:15 p.m.
- Women fight back against employers in Riverwalk show  
Sept. 26, 2018, 2:33 p.m.



