What the critics are saying about the Original Cast CD of …

***ELEANOR - An American Love Story***

**"A rare and intelligent musical …** I got a call from friends of mine who raved about a show they saw called 'Eleanor.' I was motivated to obtain a copy of the CD from Valkill Productions and loved every moment of it. The lyrics and what spoken parts of the book can be heard are quite intelligent (oh rare bird on earth!) and one feels really involved with these people. The four leads are marvelous: Anne Kanengeiser (Eleanor), Anthony Cummings (Franklin), Rita Gardner (Sara), and Steve Routman (Louis Howe). I want theater groups to take notice … you must hear this set."

 - Frank Behrens, Syndicated Music Critic, *Entertainment Times*

 **"Eleanor's a Must-Listen…** a worthy disc that starts smartly and unexpectedly. Young adult Eleanor is traveling on a train, reading and stunned by Jacob Riis' expose of tenement conditions. Her cousin Franklin happens to be on the train, too, so when she encourages those in lower classes to join her in her first-class compartment, he's impressed. (Just as I was impressed by the song, "'How the Other Half Lives'.) The authors had a good idea for the next song, too… 'Our Beautiful Daughters'. 'The New Century Walk,' Tierney's tuneful turkey trot, featured Alice Roosevelt, Teddy's madcap, immensely popular daughter to star at the coming-out party, which makes wallflower Eleanor feel all the worse. This is not any ordinary, paint-by-the-numbers show, though the numbers painted a pretty picture for Eleanor. There are many pleasures to be had here. It really is a Must-Listen.”

- Peter Filichia, *Theatre.com*

 **"Admirably reflects an extraordinary life…** a smart tribute to Eleanor Roosevelt. A case study of the intelligently crafted musical that's widely regarded as an endangered species. The piece - with handsome music, effective lyrics and an ambitious book - depicts its famous characters, their inner lives and public faces, with integrity and skill. 'How The Other Half Lives' builds plot and character in the couple's first meeting … the smart, affecting touches keep coming ... a cynical journalist endorses pragmatism in the keen 'Practical Politics' … Eleanor's 'He Touches Me' is both quietly despairing and decisive … 'Foggy Bottom'/'The Life of the Party' weaves politics and marriage into a fluid dance for power."

- Steven Winn, *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*

 **"Eleanor … At last!** Pittsburgh enjoyed this musical bio of the young Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt when it had its 1990 debut at the Pittsburgh Public Theater. Now, the music and lyrics by Thomas Tierney and John Forster are preserved in this cast album of the 1999 staging at Ford's Theatre (Washington). I called the Pittsburgh debut 'enormously engaging' with 'drama and heart … jazzy syncopated and sprightly.' You can feel all that on the recording, especially in the political and comic numbers. As other regional theaters have found, it has a lively future.

- Chris Rawson, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

 **"A very special musical, Eleanor …** A surprisingly lovely, melodically rich and ultimately wonderfully touching musical, Eleanor, has become something of a cult classic, which continues to find audiences for its special charms. Scenes between the lovers - united by idealistic desires to make something better from New York slums to the power settings in Washington - provide rich variety for mood and music. Eleanor has a strong book by Jonathan Bolt, some clever lyrics by John Forster and a score right at home in the era by Thomas Tierney. Eleanor is sung and acted superbly by Anne Kanengeiser. We don't get too many uplifting finales in contemporary musicals, but in the finale, we realize that Eleanor has found her own voice completely, and the music rises splendidly to a luminous conclusion.

- Byron Belt, Critic-at-Large, *Newhouse News Service*

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**"I first made the acquaintance of Eleanor last year and quickly fell under her spell.** Writers Thomas Tierney (Music) and John Forster (Lyrics) have produced a score which lucidly tells the story … strong on traditional attributes like melody, harmony and polished but meaningful lyrics. When Anne Kanengeiser began to sing 'He Touches Me', seldom can an 'eleven o'clock' song have been so gentle yet so powerful. The score is full of such little gems ... right from the opening number 'How the Other Half Lives'. 'The New Century Walk' and 'Foggy Bottom' inject bounce and vivacity; 'Our Beautiful Daughters' and 'Dancing On and On' style and elegance. Humour isn't too far away either with the languid 'Nothing In Particular' and the rugged 'Practical Politics'. The music is inventively arranged and recorded. Indeed mention must be made of the high quality of all aspects."

- Mike Gibb, *Masquerade Magazine* (Great Britain)

 **"A sweet, melodic, character study** of the events that shaped the person we know from the history books. Eleanor is a lush musical with period music in the style of Ragtime or Fiorello! You can easily understand why people who have heard or seen this show have a strong affinity for it, wanting to hear it again and again. The melodies are memorable … songs that flow effortlessly throughout the composition. Anne Kanengeiser has a strong passionate voice that helps create a character you want to succeed. The real benchmark of a good show album is the ability to 'see' the show with your ears. Descriptive lyrics, dialogue snippets, and intelligible lyrics are factors of this process, which Eleanor has crafted well into the recording. Fortunately you get the opportunity to hear this rich and buoyant production. This is the type of show that Broadway always clamors to see in lieu of revivals that evoke the same warm fuzzy feelings."

- Thom Rosati, *TalkinBroadway.com*

 **"An enormously entertaining release** and totally satisfying in all departments. The original cast recording of Eleanor is a fine introduction to the talented composing team of Thomas Tierney (music) and John Forster (lyrics). The composers have come up with a warm, witty and technically accomplished score. It's beautifully sung by Anthony Cummings and Anne Kanengeiser in the lead roles and also features the cast of Washington DC's Ford's Theatre. The score has some quite outstanding numbers. 'How The Other Half Lives', which opens the show is a cleverly constructed piece which introduces us to Franklin and the young Eleanor. Cummings, who sounds uncannily like FDR, and Kanengeiser have a couple of charming duets - 'If We Go On' and 'Running Before The Wind'. High praise too for Steve Routman as the brash newspaperman who sensing Franklin's political potential, takes him under his wing. His "Practical Politics" is a wonderfully funny and show-stopping piece."

- Terry Wardrope, *Words & Music* (Great Britain)

**"ELEANOR is proof that new musicals thrive far from the glare of Broadway**. Unabashedly conventional, ***ELEANOR*** grows on you. Thomas Tierney's score captures the fizzy, off-balance world of the early 1900s, while John Forster's lyrics sound consistently sensitive and adroit (for instance, he weaves a grammar lesson into Eleanor's song about charitable work among poor immigrants). The Ford's Theatre cast quickens what could have been a gallery of historical cliches. Special praise goes to all the producers who have supported this tuneful show."

Michael Barnes - Austin American-Statesman

**A genuinely appealing American musical...**
**ELEANOR** has one of the most well-proportioned scores to come out of America for several years. From its opening bars, there is a confidence about ELEANOR that makes you sit up and take notice. And the promise is delivered. It is all warm-hearted without being over sentimental. And it's intelligent. Thomas Tierney and John Forster's score is full of richness, inventive and tuneful. Some might call if old-fashioned, but if it is (and I'm not sure that it is), ***ELEANOR*** never seems less than fresh. When, in the final moments, Eleanor finally blossoms into a complete woman, you will want to stand up and cheer. Very highly recommended."

Adrian Wright - [www.musical-theatre.net](http://www.musical-theatre.net/) (Great Britain)