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Society : Starmaker
Production : Shine Again
Date : 23/04/2022
Venue : The Whitty Theatre, Wokingham

Show Report

Thank you for inviting me to see your performance of Shine Again. It was lovely to meet so many of your team and thank you for making me feel so welcome. I am glad that after the hiatus of Covid, you have been able to return 'again' to the stage to put on this journey through the musicals.

I was so impressed with the cast and amazed by the talent and confidence of these seven performers. With so few on stage each person had a lot to do, and they all had great stage presence and were in character all the time. Everyone had clear diction and great delivery in both the sketches and the songs, and they worked well together as a team in the group numbers. They all engaged with the audience, and it was clear from the beginning that they were really enjoying performing.

Max Davison: Max gave splendid performance of Corner of the Sky and sang with good tuning and tone and very clear diction. His singing was excellent for a young man of his age. His performance in 'You and me, (but mostly me)' with Charlie was great and he had perfect character and comic timing. In his monologue 'Zero for the Young Dudes' he was also very funny with great character.

Syrai-Elise Harewood-Williams: I was impressed with Syrai-Elise's acting skills a highlight of which was her monologue 'Wedding Toast'. She had excellent character and timing and her facial expressions were hilarious. Her dance to Mad Hatter was charming and gave a contrast to the other choreographed numbers.

Charlie Kendall: What a comedian Charlie is! He had great stage presence and excellent comic timing and engaged brilliantly with the audience. I really enjoyed 'You and Me (but Mostly Me)' with Max and his monologue 'Opening Night'. His lead vocal in the finale December 1963 from Jersey Boys was very good and he held the tuning well whilst dancing with the group.

Findlay Pearson: I particularly enjoyed Findlay's sketch 'Last chance for a dance', he really captured the character and delivered the humour of the piece very well. He was always in character even when playing a supporting role and fully engaged with the action.

Livy Webb: Livy had a beautiful singing voice and for me the highlight of the show was her performance in 'All that Jazz' from Chicago. She had great control over her vocal tone, with light and shade to her performance and excellent tuning. She also captured the character in her singing and totally commanded the stage. Her duet 'I Dreamed a Dream' with Florence was also very good. She is a very engaging actress and gave a very assured and funny performance in her monologue 'Yoga Fart'.

Florence Wood-Blagrove: Florence had a very tuneful singing voice and sang with lovely tone and clarity. Her solo 'Dying Ain't So Bad' was beautifully moving with lilting light and shade. She led the duet 'I Dreamed a Dream' with a confident and strong performance and had great chemistry in her performance with Oliver in 'When You're an Addams'.

Oliver Widdis: I really enjoyed Oliver's performance as Gomez in the opening song 'When You're an Addams' complete with a fantastic Spanish accent, and he led the song with confidence and really good chemistry with Florence as Morticia. He is a very accomplished actor and gave great contrasts in character in each of his sketches, I particularly enjoyed his performance in 'First comes Love' which was very funny.

Katie Upton (Director and MD) This was Katie's first time directing and she had obviously worked really hard with this group of young people on their acting and singing to produce great characterisation and delivery, whilst keeping the performance light-hearted and fun. With such a small group of performers it would be easy for them to feel nervous and exposed, but Katie had clearly given them confidence to perform and enjoy themselves. The songs were accompanied by recorded music and Katie had made sure that the cast were able to come in at the right time without a conductor. I felt though, that maybe, some of the solos and duets would have benefitted from a little movement.

Sue Costello and Vicki Widdis (Co-producers) were, I am sure kept very busy behind the scenes to support the director and to get this show onto the stage after a two-year break in performing.

Charlotte McGrath and Elsie Wood-Blagrove (Choreographers) The choreography was very enjoyable and really enhanced the production. The group had been well coached so that the dances were synchronised and effective. I particularly enjoyed the fun vibrant choreography in 'One Short Day' and the slick synchronised moves in 'All that Jazz'.

David Parsonson (Stage Manager) The set was simple with blacks and some set pieces and David ensured that these were brought on and off the stage smoothly. I was very impressed with the use of the smoke machine which added atmosphere. I'm sure that having such an experienced stage manager gave confidence to the young performers.

Oliver Bamber (Sound and Lighting) In the most part, the lighting was full light or spots, but there was also clever use of colour washes to create atmosphere. This was particularly effective with the green light for the land of Oz. The cast all had mics and the balance between the musical accompaniment and the singers was well judged.

Vicki Widdis (Costumes) The cast mostly wore blacks, but there were some lovely costumes used in some of the group musical numbers which gave contrast and enhanced the performance. The costumes for Oz were particularly effective and I also liked the costumes for the dance number Legendary.

Katie Upton and Vicki Widdis (Props) There were only a few props, but they were used effectively.

This was such a very enjoyable evening, and I was so pleased to see how much the young people were enjoying themselves too. I look forward to seeing what they do next.

Cate

NODA London District 13 Representative