



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Society : Starmaker Youth Theatre Company
Production : All Shook Up
Date : Thursday 28th / Saturday 30th March 2019
Venue : Kenton Theatre – Henley on Thames
Report by : Jeanette Maskell

Show Report

This society is lucky enough to have so many talented members that they were able to have two casts. Although as with a number of societies the lack of boys within the group meant the male principals were not doubled.

The show was a new one on me; and I thoroughly enjoyed two shows packed with energy vitality and spirit. The script was witty with a clever plot that had the audience guessing till the end and of course the diverse catchy music of the King!

Both groups had been well cast and there were some super performances from principals and chorus.

Harley Emmit – (Chad) – This was a standout performance! With a cheeky grin, captivating charismatic personality and powerful energetic movement he completely stole the show. His interaction with everyone he worked with was reactive and intuitive and he engaged fully with the audience using a look and a winning smile. His dialogue visuals and singing could not be faulted and this culminated in a flawless performance. Favourite numbers for me “Jail House Rock” and “I Don’t Want To”!

Matilda Lawrence – (Natalie/Ed) – As the town’s mechanic and tomboy this young lady was delightful. She had an underlying naivety that was charming and captivating. Her visuals were alive and striking and I so liked the besotted way she looked at Chad. They had a great rapport and this developed as the action progressed. As Ed she changed her speaking voice and deportment to portray one of the lads and this worked extremely well. Dialogue was well inflected and her singing was strong and tuneful. I particularly enjoyed “One night with You” and a “Little less Conversation”

Elsie Wood-Blagrove – (Natalie/Ed) – This young actress portrayed Natalie as a worldly wise young lady totally infatuated with Chad. The chemistry between them was honest and believable and added greatly to their relationship. She looked super in her dungarees and headscarf and moved with a lithe fluidity that was most becoming. Her dialogue was exciting and inspirational and her visuals open and vital. Her Ed was cool and trendy with dialogue that befitted the new personality. She sang well and her best numbers to my mind were “Follow that Dream” and “A Little Less Conversation”

Corey Abery – (Dennis) – As Natalie’s geeky awkward best friend this young man excelled. His visuals were animated and expressive and his dialogue dynamic and energetic. I so liked his rapport with Natalie and he made it blatantly obvious from the outset exactly how he felt about her. He brought the humour of the script to the fore at every opportunity and put fun into his movement, singing and persona. He is a real hooper and I absolutely loved watching him

dance. He has a great singing voice and I enjoyed his duet “Love me Tender” with Natalie but his highlight was “It Hurts Me”

Bianca Burduja – (Lorraine) – This young lady was enchanting as Dean’s illicit love interest. Dialogue visuals and bearing were all first rate and her relationship with Dean convincing and plausible. She has a powerful singing voice which was particularly suited to “That’s All Right”

Jessica Hilton-Owen – (Lorraine) – As Dean’s love interest this young actress was winsome and beguiling. Their relationship had depth and understanding and therefore totally cogent. She had nimble agile movement which complemented her character and her dialogue and visuals were expressive and articulate. I enjoyed her duet with Dean immensely.

Molly Barnett – (Sylvia) – Playing a mature character can be a challenge for a youth group; however that was not the case here. This actress had a credible and ostensible characterisation that was forward and forthright. She created depth in her relationships with Jim and Lorraine and her dialogue was honest and true. She has a great singing voice and her rendition of “There’s always Me” was a knockout.

Katie Weller – (Sylvia) – As Lorraine’s mother this actress put in a commendably mature performance. I liked the rapport she created with Jim and Lorraine and also her driven passionate dialogue. Passion was also a positive trait of her singing which was mellow rounded and soulful; which enhanced “There’s always Me” brilliantly.

Robyn Warrick-Clarke – (Miss Sandra) – This young actress was sassy pert and vivacious! Her dialogue was fervent and impassioned and these traits shone throughout her numbers. I so liked her treatment of Chad which enhanced their quartet “Teddy Bear/Hound Dog” and her scene with Ed was highly amusing and the final scene when she discovers Dennis is the one who had sent her the poetry. “Let Yourself Go” was well sung.

Destiny Andrady – (Miss Sandra) – As the intelligent curator of the museum this young lady was sultry and provocative. Her dialogue was melodic and stirring and this added credence to her scenes with Chad Ed and Dennis. She brought out the humour of the script with a good sense of timing. A well sung “Let Yourself Go”

Seth Macleod – (Jim) – This young actor has a natural aptitude for comedy. His characterisation was fun outlandish and somewhat lamentable. His interaction with Sylvia and Natalie was spot on and his dialogue with them vital and vigorous. He moves well and looked easy and comfortable in the numbers. Although he is not the greatest singer and does at times have tuning issues; he nonetheless puts his numbers over in character and in such a way that the audience can forgive him his lack of prowess in this field. “Don’t be Cruel” with Chad was excellent with some hilarious visuals.

Francesca Waters – (Matilda) – As the town’s prim and proper mayor this young lady brought a great deal of humour to the role. Visually she was bright and radiant and her dialogue was energetic and buoyant. I liked her relationship with Earl and the way her character softened when he expressed his displeasure at her always judging people and his subsequent declaration of love. “Devil in Disguise” was well sung with a light hearted spirit

Hannah Day – (Matilda) – This young actress had the character of to a T. She was candid outspoken and sincere. Her dialogue was forthright and unembellished which was perfect for the role and her visuals though austere were still expressive. She brought a great deal of fun to “Devil in Disguise” and her top note was joyous.

Alex Hutson - (Dean) – I so enjoyed this young man’s performance; he has a natural acting talent which came to the fore in his scenes with Lorraine. Their relationship was true and believable and developed well throughout the performance. I liked the rebellious Dean who stood up to his mother then looked petrified at what she would say. He has a terrific singing voice and “Now or Never” was outstanding

Liam Champion – (Earl) – This was an understated performance that was totally right for the character. He was so endearing following Matilda around looking every bit an overgrown lap dog! He really came into his own when he confronted Matilda and told her to shut up!; and the audience enjoyed it immensely. He has a great speaking voice which heightened his dialogue immensely.

Dancers/Jailhouse Rockers

Dancers/Blue Suede Shoes – Both groups of dancers shone throughout all the numbers they were involved in. They were totally ebullient and their moves were fluent and lyrical.

Kamran Seal – (Warden)

Jessica Lambden – (Henrietta/Female Clarke)

Elizabeth Holden – (Virginia)

Megan Cowmeadow – (Randy Female/Guy 1)

Joseph Akinola – (Townsperson/Bus Driver) -

Charlie Woods – (Fella)

Looey Whitlam – (Guy 2)

Livy Webb- (Female Customer) – This group of minor characters portrayed their roles with panache. They had good well inflected dialogue; supporting the principals and enhancing the overall performance.

Tyler Bowley – (Warden)

Georgina Imberg – (Henrietta)

Daisy Housego – ((Virginia)

Hayley Crofts – (Randy Female/Guy 1)

Ronan Cundy – (Townsperson/Bus Driver)

Oliver Widdis – (Fella)

Millie Cooke – (Guy 2)

Misty Branch – (Female Clerk)

Maddie Jones – (Female Customer) – These minor characters had well delineated characters that they maintained throughout. Dialogue was well delivered with excellent diction projection and intonation. They can be confident that they added greatly to a super overall performance

Jessica Lamden/Megan Cowmeadow/Elizabeth Holden – (Heart Break Trio)

Georgina Imberg/Hayley Crofts/Daisy Housego – (Heart Break Trio) – As backing to this classic song these two trios were dynamic and energetic in their singing and dancing; blending effortlessly with the principals.

Molly McGuinness/Jessica Lamden/Looey Whitlam – (Angels)

Faith Wood-Blagrove/Misty Branch/Millie Cooke – (Angels) – These two groups were great fun; with fresh sassy singing and excellent crisp moves.

Ensemble/Jailhouse Rockers

Ensemble/Blue Suede Shoes – Both groups acquitted themselves brilliantly displaying strengths in acting singing and dancing. They worked as a team and supported the principals with great aplomb.

Rhi O’Keefe – (Director/Producer) – This young lady had done a remarkable job in giving clear and decisive leadership to the cast. What an achievement to get both sets of principals to portray the same character whilst allowing them to input their own personalities. She had brought out the humour of the script and taught the young cast good comic timing. Her staging was super with good groupings spacing and entrances and exits. There were some lovely touches throughout; especially the freezes the statues and Dennis’s leap into Miss Sandra’s arms which enhanced the overall performance greatly. The whole piece had good pace copious energy and terrific flow culminating in an enjoyable and entertaining piece of theatre.

Amy Bingham – (Musical Director) – This MD had worked tirelessly with principals and chorus; and they clearly responded positively to her direction. She had given them first rate guidance in lyrics dynamics and diction; and confidence in their entries and timings. There were some great harmonies from principals and chorus that added greatly to the numbers.

Charlotte Tait – (Choreographer) – assisted by **Lucy Turner** I was impressed with the routines created by this choreographer. There were varied moves from a touch of “Fosse” to a little jazz and a deal of musical theatre. All numbers were high in strength energy and vitality and performed with flare verve and enthusiasm. In recent productions I have been disappointed with the tightness of the performance; however on this occasion the cast were uniform tight and in complete sync. I so enjoyed the opening number and really set the bar for the rest of the show.

Carol Hodgkinson – (Stage Manager) – **James Cooke** ASM and **Crew** this SM ensured his team kept the action moving by cueing them to change the scenes promptly at all times. I’m not sure why the tabs were pulled as there did not appear to be any reason for it once they opened again.

Rebecca Simons – (Lighting Designer) – with technical assistant **Louis Martin** this was a good plot with some great effects. Although there was the odd occasion when the cast were singing in darkness before the spot came up on them. The plunge into red every time anyone sang “One night with you” was brilliant and superbly cued.

Tom Horrox – (Sound Designer) – assisted by **Katie Upton** Sound was effective and well balanced. There were one or two occasions when personal mics weren’t brought up quickly

enough and we missed some of the dialogue; however sound effects were well cued and pitched at just the right level

Luana Caratelli – (Costume Administrator) – with costumes from **Starmaker Costume Hire** these were perfect for the characters suiting their personalities totally. What a shame Jailhouse Rocker Sylvia didn't have a Sunday frock. I particularly liked the statues and angels and the skirts and tops were typical of the bobby soxers. The boy's leather jackets Sylvia's frock and Miss Sandra's outfit were all perfect. The Chorus' costumes were great and added a splash of colour to the stage.

Valentina Holden/Jessica Costello – (Properties) – For the most part these were perfect for their use, tables chairs animal ornaments and fairy lights. However the sign that appeared in the café scenes was unreadable from a distance and the motorbike under a cloth really didn't work.

Make Up – This was consistent across the board and highlighted the youngsters' features superbly giving them a light and fresh look. Whoever had the job of removing Ed's beard did the best they could in the time given although they didn't manage to completely clean it off.

Gemma Wilson – (Programme) - This was well laid out on good quality paper with the use of a good size font. I liked the white writing on the black background it looked effective and was easy to read. It contained a lot of information about the society and Elvis which was relevant and interesting

Thank you

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Jeanette Maskell - NODA Representative - London Region - Area 13