

**Region**



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Society : Starmaker Theatre Company  
Production : Seussical  
Date : 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019  
Venue : The Oakwood Centre  
Report by : Annie Hertler-Smith

[Show](#)

Thank you for inviting me to your production of SEUSSICAL, an excellent choice of show for young performers. It is some time since I have seen one of your shows and this was the first time I have seen your younger members perform. It was good to meet and chat with Vicki and Lucy in the interval. Clearly, over the past 32 years you have become a very successful group with a very impressive list of past shows and Scroll of Honour. The Souvenir Programme was packed with lots of information and was very colourful and clearly presented.

I note that your Director, OLIVER KYTE and Choreographer SHERRIDAN POVEY had been members of Starmaker themselves. Oliver was assisted by another Starmaker alumni KATIE UPTON and together the three of them had put together a show with good pace, well-rehearsed entrances and exits and some fun dance numbers which were performed with energy. Oliver also designed the set which was, understandably, simple, leaving maximum space for the cast to perform. I quite understand why the structure housing Mayzie's nest and egg needed to be 'on stage' all the time but I did wonder if it might have had more impact when we first saw Mayzie in her nest if it could have been camouflaged in some way before hand.

Musical Direction was in the hands of JOE BARR with his band on a balcony to the Stage Right side of the auditorium. This was difficult for the performers as Joe himself was not in their sight line although I was not sure if there was a monitor anywhere at the back of the hall for them to focus on. Overall the large (for the size of the venue) band was lively but it was too loud. The consequence of this was that it was very difficult to hear and understand the clever lyrics throughout the show. I also felt that more attention might have been paid to diction throughout. Not everyone in the audience would have known the show or the songs and as there is so much singing it is vital that the lyrics are clear as the story unfolds.

Lighting was designed and operated by BECCA SIMONS. Overall there was some nice effects. However I hope that the one or two late LX cues were put right for the next night.

Sound was designed (and presumably operated) by LOUIS MARTIN. Unfortunately there were quite a few issues with the sound throughout the performance with a number of mics being brought up late. Again I hope that this was put right for the following performances.

The wardrobe, administered by LUANA CARATELLI, was really super with lots of lovely bright colours and interesting costumes helping to make the characters very clear. Just one little point for the older BIRD GIRLS, please try to conceal your bra straps with strappy

costume tops. Luana also looked after the Hair and Make-Up, both of which were very good with some beautiful face painting on the Bird Girls.

OLIVER KYTE and RHI O'KEEFE looked after props all of which were very good. I have mentioned the structure which housed Mayzie's nest and egg – I thought it was a shame that the cracking open of the egg and the appearance of the 'elephant bird' was done with the Horton and Gertrude covering the action, maybe they were just badly placed at the performance I saw.

TYLER BOWLEY played the key role of The Cat In The Hat holding the show together as he wove himself in and out of the action in a feline way. After what was probably a nervous 'first night' start Tyler relaxed and grew in confidence and, once he was in the swing, gave a really great performance. He was very engaging and comfortably played to the audience when needed, for example in the ad lib Auction scene. His 'piano' playing was terrific, very well done.

Horton was played by FERGUS WOOD-BLAGROVE. Again I felt that opening night nerves were the reason for another rather unsure start, not helped by some late mic cues. Fergus gave a very sympathetic and gentle edge to his character, just try to be a little more confident especially at the start of songs. Fergus is a promising young performer.

FLORENCE WOOD-BLAGROVE played JoJo. What a delightful performance this was, calm and confident. Florence is a very natural performer who has a beautiful singing voice which is very easy to listen to and her diction was excellent. I particularly enjoyed 'Alone in the Universe' very well done.

The Boy was well played by EDDIE REED. Eddie moved around with ease and energy and was very engaging. I felt it was a shame that he often spoke and sung from the back of the auditorium or from the balcony where the band was located which made it difficult to actually see him at times.

The shy and awkward Gertrude McFuzz was played by MEGAN MAREE. Megan seemed a little too understated at times but overall this was a nice characterization and Megan coped well with her oversized tail.

Mayzie was, as required, very full on, fluffy, flirty and confident, full of 'girl power'. I just felt that a couple of times LOOEY WHITLAM lost control of her character due to a little too much physicality. Overall Looey gave a confident performance with good singing.

DAISY HOUSEGO played Sour Kangaroo in her super gold, flashy costume. Daisy has a big singing voice – just what is need for this part - but try to keep it under control to avoid it sounding 'shouty' and forced. A confident performance, well done.

KAMRAN SEAL gave a great performance as Mr Mayor. Kamran is another very natural performer. Although playing a relatively minor role Kamran made an impact every time he was on stage and came across as really well rehearsed and enjoying being on stage. Very well done.

MEGAN COWMEADOW played Mrs Mayor and complimented her 'husband' Kamran very well. This was another neat, controlled and confident performance.

General Schmitz was played with gusto by OLIVER WIDDIS who controlled his Military school pupils with authority.

Thing 1 and 2 were played by JOSH UNDERWOOD and OLIVIA WEBB. They worked very well as a team and performed with confidence and a sense of purpose. I particularly enjoyed watching Olivia who has a lovely 'stage smile' and is a lovely neat dancer.

The five Bird Girls were played by ANNA NAWACKI, ELIZABETH HOLDEN, FREYA PALMER, MOLLY HALL and SAANVI RAJU. I did get a little confused with their various costume changes because at times they all had headdresses on, then sometimes not all of them did, also some had tail feathers and some didn't. They did some good work together as a team but just from time to time the movements were a little ragged.

The Wickersham Brothers were played by ALESSANDRO PORCELLI, KALEB MAREYA, OLIVER WIDDIS and ROWAN CAMFIELD. There were some nice individual performances here and some good tricks and acrobats but there were times when, as 'team', the boys were a little uncontrolled which detracted from their singing and diction.

Supporting roles were well played, with some great costumes too, by FREYA PALMER, LEAH MASKELL, MADDIE JONES, ELIZABETH HOLDEN, ELIZABETH ALLEN, CHLOE BURTON and EVE HOSKIN.

Many of the principals also doubled as members of the Ensemble.

Overall the show was bright colourful and energetic, there were no apparent missed cue lines and all entrances and exits were well executed. Thank you for an entertaining evening and Good Luck with your future productions.