

Happy Days – A New Musical  
North Manchester AODS

Director	Anthony Quimby
Musical Director	Anthony Quimby
Choreographer	Anita Tymcyslyn

Most people are familiar with the TV series from the 70's with Henry Winkler playing the character Fonzie but this new musical set around the characters from that TV series was a North West premiere so was a new one to me.

What a fantastic show with many varied musical styles from 50's Rock and Roll to barbershop and a cappella. Ok so there's not much of a story but what little there is was fun and well directed and we left the theatre with a real feel good factor, humming the tunes which were really great. I especially loved The Thing About Girls, Romeo Midnight and Ooh Bop by the Dial Tones and Fonzie. What I Dreamed Last Night was a lovely female duet between Marion & Joanie and Dancing on the Moon was such a beautiful number between the two leads who performed it beautifully( but more on them later)

The sets looked fabulous with drop down scenery including Arnold's Diner sign. The sets were built in house as with most new shows there is not much available out there to hire for this show.

The lighting complimented the scenes but there was some heavy crackling on miking packs early on in the show and some of the balancing between instruments and voices took a while to settle in.

The costumes and props looked great and were very in keeping with the period. The stage crew worked hard to create a seamless show which had a number of scene changes. The choreography worked really well and there were some lovely dancers in the company.

And so to the cast. And what a talented bunch they were. Samuel Maurice played Fonzie beautifully. Not only did he look the part with the swagger and cool ways but he delivered his lines impeccably, sounded fabulous on his musical numbers and put some nice dance moves in too.

Laura Mac as Pinky Tuscadero was a great match for Samuel/Fonzie with stunning vocals, great acting, dance moves and chemistry between the two which made the attraction believable.

Steven Cheeseman was an excellent Ritchie Cunningham. What a stunning performer. This young man had so much stage presence, added wonderful vocals and delivery of dialogue. My only complaint is where have you been hiding?

Potsie, Ralph and Chachi were played by Jack Griffiths, George Harry Jones and Tom Winstanley respectively. The three all delivered great performances but vocally supported each other wonderfully. The barbershop and a cappella numbers were my favourite numbers in the show. Well done guys.

David Lockwood and David Sellens came into this cast late on as Arnold and Mr Cunningham but you would never know. They were both well suited to their roles and did fabulous jobs. Catherine Humphreys played a sweet Laurie Beth who delivered her lines well.

Alex Davey put in a nice performance as Joanie but a few lines were lost to miking issues and rushed dialogue. Kathryn Quimby played her mum Marion with the air of calm and warmth that I remember from the TV show. Vocally their voices blended beautifully on "What I Dreamed Last Night".

The two big comedy roles in this show were filled admirably by Chris Law and Barry Crossley who had multiple roles of Leopards, The Malachi brothers and Elvis and James Dean respectively. I laughed at the brother's thuggish ways and the fight scene in slow motion looked really effective and comical. The delivery of dialogue from both of these actors was fabulous and they played so well opposite each other.

This was a real surprise of a show. I loved it and had I had another night free would definitely have gone to see it again. Anthony Quimby did a fantastic job on both Artistic and Musical Direction especially as it's not a show which has been performed by Amateurs before so the vision was completely his. More societies should perform this lovely feel good show. Well done to everyone involved.

Reviewed By Sharon Drummond  
NODA NW Region (District 7 Representative)