

GREATER MANCHESTER DRAMA FEDERATION

Musicals

FULL LENGTH PLAY FESTIVAL 2012/13

NORTH MANCHESTER AMATEUR OPERATIC & DRAMATIC SOCIETY

HAPPY DAYS

Adjudication date – May 17th 2013

Production Highlights: Excellent accompaniment from the band.

To think about for the Future:

The Production

I'm well aware that one can't expect Shakespeare when looking at a musical comedy libretto. I must say from the start that on reading the libretto left me very worried about the lack of content. I found the story very weak and without knowing the music I had to stop thinking about it hoping that attendance at the performance may change my opinion of the piece.

Having attended the performance I have to say that my opinion of the libretto/story content has not changed. Without such strong musical performances from the on stage artistes and band I think this particular show could be the equivalent of road kill.

Direction & Musical Direction – Anthony Quimby

Once again Anthony I sit in front of my computer full of admiration at what is an awesome talent. I questioned in my pantomime review whether it was wise for the company to place such great responsibility on the shoulders of a single individual but you don't appear to have any trouble rising to the challenge.

I enjoyed your interpretation of the settings required for the production. It was simplicity at its best with the ground rows permanently placed to offer some kind of perspective to the set. The addition of various pieces of furniture and signs with minimal use of trucks and large set pieces contributed greatly to the fast movement of the production.

Musically you gave a very strong lead to the cast with an excellent band. I was particularly impressed with the close harmony work which sounded absolutely solid.

To often in shows that require a close harmony group it's easy to detect one singer that isn't quite as secure in their work you've obviously worked the cast well.

There is a great deal of reference material for the cast to use for their character development but I was pleased to see that you hadn't taken the impersonation route. I thought the way you'd developed the technique of having a flavour of the original television characters so it was easy to bond with the characters being presented to the audience.

Anthony I think that you gave the society an extremely well crafted production from what I personally think is weak original material. Looking round the audience on the night I attended everyone certainly enjoyed their evening at the theatre and that is all that matters. This production will certainly enhance the reputation of the company.

Choreographer – Anita Tymcyslyn

Anita I'm not an expert on dance by any means but I can easily identify the styles of the various decades of the twentieth century and I had great pleasure watching the company present to their audience dancing in the style of the 1950's. I like the way that the full company were involved in the dance routines. They had obviously been well drilled because I didn't find my eye being drawn to the person that didn't know what they were doing. This is not only an acknowledgment that the company had done their homework but to you and your talent as a choreographer. As a production team you've obviously worked closely with Anthony to produce this slick piece of theatre.

TECHNICAL

The Set/Stage Management – Diane Wright-Amis

Diane I've already commented in my remarks to Anthony that I liked the simplicity of the set design. Having taken such a simplistic approach was effective and enhanced the production. There is no acknowledgement that I can see in the programme for a props team so I have to include the props in your remarks. The stage crew moved swiftly and effectively when they were working on the set changes. The changes were slick and effective and did not interrupt the smoothness of the production. The sets were dressed well and all the personal props were in keeping with the period.

Lighting – Liam Jones

Liam I think you should be congratulated on the plot for this show. Having decided on the way the set should look really put pressure on you to make sure that the acting areas were lit well. You were required to light specific acting areas which you did very well with very little spillage so our eyes were only drawn to the area of the stage where the action was happening and other happenings on the stage were not noticeable. This was a well constructed lighting plot.

Sound Design – Knights Acoustics - Sound Operation – Leon Deakin

Leon I'm not sure what the dynamic is between yourself, the company and Knight Acoustics but I suppose its right that I address my remarks to you as operator. I think to start with I have to point out that at the opening of the production my heart sank because I was struggling to tune my ears in to the show because I think it was over amplified. It only took a few minutes for the sound to settle to a reasonable level and the rest of the evening the amplification was perfect. Amplification of voices over such a strong band can be difficult to manage I know but I heard every word easily. A job well done.

Wardrobe – Sheila Mills

Sheila this show was extremely good on the eye. I often think that creating a period look that can still be remembered by the generation that lived through it. I only have two comments really. I would like to have seen Pinky dressed in something a little more fitted I thought the shorts a little too baggy I would like to have seen Laura's figure shown off a little better. I also had a little problem with Fonzie's jeans and the contrasting material patch. It was rather startling when it was seen the first time. I think I would have changed them for an alternative pair.

THE ACTORS

Richie Cunningham – Steven Cheeseman

Steven there is a technique that not every actor is able to master and that is the technique of talking directly to the audience. There was naturalness about your delivery that attracted me toward the character that you were portraying. You were good to watch as Ritchie as he tries his best to help everyone. I liked your work with the other three friends you were very well matched as a 'unit'. I thought the feel of the Cunningham family unit was one of warmth and love. You portrayed the part well.

Arnold – David Lockwood

David the whole plot of this piece surrounds your character as the popular malt shop owner Arnold. I thought that you portrayed your character well you certainly got the audience on your side with the campaign to save the malt shop. Although the same character I particularly enjoyed your role as part of the Leopard lodge which from the audience just looked like all the lodge members were having the greatest fun. You presented the audience with a lovely character.

Potsie – Jack Griffiths

I think that the reference to Lavern and Shirley would have been lost on the majority of the audience attending you performance on the night I attended but I found it very amusing. As one of the gang of four friends I thought that you presented a really

credible performance that depicted a character that could be believed as being a friend for life. I think that your musical contribution was excellent. I always admire singers that can perform really close harmony work without the slightest sign of nerves.

Ralph Malph – George Harry Jones

Like I've already said to Jack George you gave a very credible performance as one of the gang of four friends. All four of the performers in the friends group could be believed as being friends for life. I thought that the comedy fight sequence that you and Steven were involved with was extremely funny and very memorable. Vocally you matched the other three very well presenting a close harmony group sound that was first rate. Well done on presenting quarter of an extremely good vocal group.

Chachi Arcola – Tom Winstanley

As soon as one hears the name Chachi the name Joanie automatically enters the mind from the subconscious. I think that perhaps the romance between them is the most memorable romances in television history. I enjoyed the gentleness of your character in relation to Joanie and also in relation to the band of four. Like the other members of the four you should be complimented on your musical contribution to this production.

Joanie Cunningham – Alex Davey

Alex your character is the other half of the romance I referred to in Tom's remarks. I thought that you portrayed the growing pains of a teenager of the fifties very well. The fifties was a far more innocent age than the one we currently live in but I think you captured that innocence perfectly in your characterisation.

Howard Cunningham – David Sellens

Howard Cunningham the archetypal parent of the fifties. What a lovely character you played David. I think that you showed the pride of a father in his children very well. The character you played obviously too his place in the local community very seriously. I really liked the fun of the Leopard Lodge which you led. There was innocence in the relationship you developed with Kathryn as Marion. This was lovely to see and believable.

Marion Cunningham – Kathryn Quimby

Marion Cunningham the power behind the throne. It was very amusing towards the end of the piece when your character finally came into her own Kathryn as we saw her ambitions revealed. The true strength of your character had been hidden for virtually the whole show. This was another well developed character, one of many presented to the audience by the very strong principal cast.

Sam Cicero/Count Malachi/Leopard Mac/Elvis – Chris Law

Chris you looked like you were having the greatest fun in presenting your numerous parts to the audience. I think that all the audience will remember you mostly in the part of Count. The comedy boxing brothers were played at the highest level of comedic acting and had the audience howling with laughter. Played at a lower level of comedy but still loved by the audience was Mac the Leopard Lodge member part of a group of the cast that looked as if they were having nothing but fun with their presentation. I suppose that your impersonation of 'The King' was visually very funny.

Laurie Beth – Catherine Humphreys

Catherine this was quite a nice little part in the show. As Richie's partner there wasn't a great deal of individual work to do but you complimented the character that Steven presented to the audience well.

Fonzie (Arthur Fonzarelli) – Samuel Maurice

Samuel I think that of all the cast you had the hardest job because I think of all the characters in the original television series Henry Winkler's Fonzie is remembered by many fondly more than any other character. Like I've said already I think that you took the right approach to the character. You gave us the flavour of the original without going down the road of impersonation. Vocally I thought that you were very strong singing what I think are songs that I think would be quite taxing in their style on the vocal apparatus of any performer. I liked the way you had been matched well with Laura as Pinky if the actress playing opposite you had not been as strong as she the love element of this piece would not have worked. You gave your audience a very endearing performance that will have stirred fond memories of the original source material.

Leopard Manny/Jumpy Malachi/James Dean – Barry Crossley

Barry you were indeed a man of many parts. You showed us the fun of being a member of the Leopard Lodge as well as a James Dean impression which I'm afraid I don't feel qualified enough to comment on the quality of the impression. I must say that I thought Jumpy was a terrific part being played at the highest level comedy characterisation which got great reactions from the audience. Barry you gave your audience three lovely characters to watch.

Pinky Tuscadero – Laura Mac

Laura, Pinky was certainly a very fiery woman with great personal pride at her chosen path in life. As always in musical theatre when characters are having problems connecting it is usually because they have very similar personalities to each other. This was of course the problem between Fonzie and Pinky but this would not have come across unless you and Samuel had not been so well matched. Your musical contribution to the production was excellent with your strong voice.

Ensemble

I'd like to compliment the ensemble of the company for the way they supported the principal cast. Playing background roles isn't the easiest of things to do. I liked the way that you had all developed your individual characters working in pairs and small groups together to present a plausible community to the audience and I think this was appreciated by the audience as well judging by their reaction to the performance on the night I attended.

I would like to thank the officials of the company who entertained me very well on the night I attended. I'd like to wish the company well in their endeavours now that the full re-launch of the society is under way in this spectacular way and look forward to hearing of your progress as well as attending future performances.

Brian J Lawson
Adjudicator – Musicals
Greater Manchester Drama Federation
Full Length Festival