

noda

Kate

Kiss

Me,

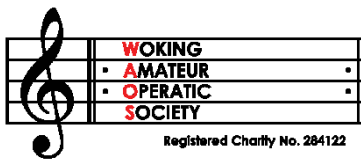


**Rhoda
McGaw
Theatre**

**Evenings 7:30pm
Saturday Matinée 2:30pm**

2nd - 6th May 2017

Music & Lyrics by Cole Porter. Book by Bella & Samuel Spewack
By arrangement with MusicScope and Stage Musicals Limited of New York



noda

KISS ME, KATE
MAY 2017
WOKING AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

This wonderful Cole Porter musical was the first one to win a Tony Award and was staged almost seventy years ago at the New Century Theatre in New York where it ran for 1077 performances. Three years later it opened at the Coliseum Theatre in London for a run of 501 performances. The musical numbers are regarded as some of Cole Porter's most brilliant ones and cover a whole gamut of emotions. There are tender love songs, Viennese Waltzes, big show biz anthems and some acutely witty and pointed songs, and almost all of them familiar to the audience. As a play within a play it requires two styles of acting, a challenge that was successfully tackled by all those taking part.

Throughout the overture the cast gradually filled the stage and the scene built up to the bustling backstage of the Baltimore Theatre. There was plenty of business for the cast and the audience were drawn in from the start.

The role of Kate requires an enormous amount of physical energy and passion, plus vocal ability, and Melanie Morrissey was outstanding as Lilli Vanessi /Katherine. The tussles with Petruchio were incredibly realistic and on her part full of venom.

Tim Beasley played the arrogant but likeable actor Fred Graham/Petruchio, the man determined to tame her, and his singing and acting were strong. 'Where is the Life' when he stood alone on the stage was excellent.

Their love/hate relationship both on and off stage was superbly depicted and the respite during 'Wunderbar' gave a glimpse of a previous life which was in complete contrast to the backbiting relationship they now shared.

What a find you have in Matt Gardener who not only sings and acts well but can dance too! He was very good as Bill Calhoun/Lucentio.

Cabaret star Lois (Bianca) turned would be Shakespearian actress was played with style by Sam Bottle and 'I'm a girl who would marry' was saucy and fun.

Her two other suitors Gremio and Hortensio played by John Moody and Patrick Coad entered into the spirit of the number and supported the leading roles well throughout.

Sam Moylan-Heydt was brilliant as Paulie. The role crossed very well from male to female and she looked as though she enjoyed every minute of it. I certainly loved watching her in this role and thought it her best. 'Too Darn Hot' was super.

A good performance too was from Nicki Farrar as Hattie who sang beautifully after a slightly insecure few bars in the opening number.

Mike Bartlett acquitted himself well as the single minded General Harrison and he looked the part, and Brian Beamish was convincing as the gentle and rather bewildered father of his two strong daughters.

'Brush up your Shakespeare' is one of the many musical highlights in the show and as the two gangsters Brian Higgs and Peter Howitt put it across with a casual confidence. They brought out the comedy and worked really well together in these great tongue-in-cheek roles.

The company and dancers were well rehearsed in the dance routines and Hannah Dare's choreography for the two different eras was attractively designed. I don't know who choreographed the 'fights' but they appeared completely unstructured.

The swipe was impressive and the set was well designed adapting to the dressing rooms easily. Furniture and properties all suited the period. The dressing rooms adjoining walls were rather unstable but possibly attaching them together was not an option, and the Square in Padua was attractive.

'We Open in Venice' was fun as was the entertainment set in front of the swipe whilst Lili and Fred sorted themselves out behind it. In 'Too Darn Hot', the company looked

suitably lethargic because of the high temperature but there was not a bead of perspiration in sight. Perhaps some costumes could have been sprayed lightly in appropriate places? A small point but it all adds to the overall presentation of the number.

Costumes were attractive, the finale ones looked splendid and hair and makeup were suitable for the two periods in which it was set.

The backstage crew were efficient and the technical side of the production worked well too.

The musicians supported the soloists sympathetically except for 'From This Moment On' when they were a little too loud.

Martine brought to life this delightful, timeless musical comedy, and together with the talented company members provided the audience with a wonderful evening of entertainment.

Your programme is as always nicely put together and I will forward them onto Kay Rowan.

Thank you for inviting me to see 'Kiss Me Kate' and for your hospitality on the evening.

E. Gloria Smith

N.O.D.A. South East Regional Representative – District 12