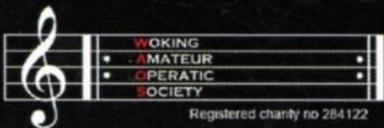


WAOS
PRESENTS

BUGSY MALONE



8 - 12 MAY 2012

WOKING AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

BUGSY MALONE

MAY 2012

The musical 'Bugsy Malone' was a first for me and I must be one of the few people who have not even seen the film of the same name!

Fiona's adaptation was very good indeed and although it was undoubtedly out of necessity due to the lack of men, I thought that having a female gang worked brilliantly. I'm pleased that she took out the slapstick moments which don't appeal nearly so much to an adult audience, and she definitely achieved her aim of producing a sexy, glitzy musical.

Action in a busy New York street at the start was bustling with lots of different and interesting goings on and I'm sure I'm not alone in enjoying this particular approach to the opening of a show.

The first company song 'Bugsy' was superbly choreographed, indeed Lorraine's choreography throughout was very good, and the dancers gave polished performances.

Ian and his band played at the right level (sadly not often the case in musicals) and never overpowered the singers. In the audition scene they were also involved as performers and their gold and black waistcoats made them part of the show.

Richard Dawson's acting was good but I felt the famous gangster was a little underplayed, more relaxed than I'd expected for the lead role of Bugsy. I wonder if it was his youthful appearance that made him appear less tough and perhaps the rake of his hat was also less than gangster-like. His 'NooYoik' accent was consistent.

Playing Blousey Brown, Calliopi McDowell was delightful and her character developed nicely as the show progressed. Her singing was good and she moved well too.

As the leader of the gang and owner of the Speak Easy Brian Higgs made a great Fat Sam Stacetto and gave a strong performance. He has good stage presence.

Leading the female gangsters Melanie Murza gave a confident performance and looked every inch the tough cookie Madison May.

Geninne Menzies played Tallulah with style. Her acting and singing were excellent and I see that she choreographed 'My Name is Tallulah' which I noted as 'super'. That really was a splendidly dressed and executed number.

In the role of Fizzy, David Methven was first class. His character was in complete contrast to the other men on stage and he played it brilliantly. His singing in the duet with Dottie, 'Tomorrow' was very touching - and he can dance too!

Anthony Batchelor and Patrick Coad playing the parts of Cagey and Leroy respectively gave good performances and did well with their accents. I remember them both with North Country ones in 'The Hired Man'.

There were a number of smaller parts played by the cast and Gillian Freeman did a particularly funny one as the bored gum-chewing waitress. The three reporters were also very funny.

The auditions were especially amusing with Anthony Batchelor as a wonderfully bored, dismissive, seen it all before sort of guy and the hopefuls were the usual cross section of would be entertainers.

The dancer was very funny; the ventriloquist a clever idea with the two ladies' movements so very realistic. It was a little difficult to hear all of Brian's dialogue clearly from his position behind the ladies.

Brett was hysterical as the opera singer. I understand he stood in for someone else but that possibly made it all the more funny. I wondered about the choice of song though as he was dressed as someone from a Wagner opera.

Clive Moon's accent took a little while to settle into Irish as Lieutenant O' Dreary but it was more recognizable as the show progressed.

The routine in the gym in the black and turquoise outfits was another good scene and Anthony sang well. The fight choreography was convincing.

Scenery was simple but effective with the two rostra and art deco flats acting as bases for the gangs etc. and the backcloth of New York sky-scrapers added atmosphere to the street scenes.

The rolling trees were quickly positioned on stage for the picnic in the park and the glitter curtain created glamour at Fat Sam's Speakeasy.

Props were suitable and the type of guns used by the gangsters made it quite clear that this was a musical comedy.

Cathy Chappell did a brilliant job with the colour co-ordinated costumes and the fact that some of the non-uniform ones were perhaps a little more eclectic didn't matter as the overall effect was extremely attractive. I liked the mixture of pinks and black worn by May's broads, the muted colours in the 'Bugsy Malone' number and the red/black/yellow outfits the men (Bums) wore.

Some of the men were wearing inappropriate shoes for the period and Bugsy's hat was rather more 'pork-pie' than 'gangster'.

Hair and make-up were fine except for Blousy's lips which were too pale.

I know that there was a problem with the lighting for the 'heaven/hell' but the required effect was still achieved and the finale was impressive.

Perhaps the only disappointment from my point of view was that there was not quite enough musical content. Two or three more numbers would have padded out the production into a full-blown musical.

Everyone taking part in 'Bugsy Malone' played their part with enthusiasm and contributed to a fun and enjoyable entertainment.

As usual your programme is full of interest/pertinent facts with good quality photographs of all those taking part, and the front cover is eye catching.

Thank you for inviting me to see the show and for your usual hospitality on the evening. I enjoyed meeting Fiona and Ian again and look forward to seeing 'Pirates' in November.

E. Gloria Smith

NODA South East Regional Representative District 12