



Society : Maidenhead Operatic Society
Production : The Pyjama Game
Date : Friday 20th May 2011
Venue : Norden Farm Arts Centre
Report by : Steve Bold, NODA Representative, Area 14

Report

A lively and enjoyable performance of this classic and interestingly set musical was presented to us by the enthusiastic company of Maidenhead Operatic Society.

The whole company performed well and were a pleasure to watch throughout the evening, as they really entered into the character of the performance with an energy and enthusiasm that is too often lacking when a company has spent so long rehearsing and performing a comedy. The director's light touch with the humour throughout was perfectly pitched, and kept the pace moving along nicely, particularly in the more farcical second act.

The choreography was well-judged, perfectly suiting the period in which the show is set, and in the opening of act two, which is neither easy to choreograph or perform, but was well done by all involved. The simple moves in the larger chorus numbers also kept the stage looking lively without making too many demands on the non-dancers within the company, but giving the more confident dancers room to shine. Again, this is a difficult balance to achieve, but everyone performed with aplomb.

Liz Couper Johnston, Babe

An excellent, powerful singing voice with which she interpreted her musical numbers very well, her diction and intonation were spot-on. Her on/off relationship with Sid was well portrayed and particularly evocative as the actors are married in real life. They both made an enormous impact and were an excellent pairing.

James Couper Johnston, Sid

As the factory superintendent, new to his job, James gave a very good interpretation of this part. Here we had a good actor who interpreted his role well and his stormy relationship with 'Babe' was first class. James has an excellent singing voice, which blended well with 'Babe' and came to the fore in the numbers, 'Hey There' and 'There Once Was a Man'.

Andrew Smith, Hines

A work study man with a heart, Andrew had a good sense of comic timing coupled with a good range of physical mannerisms as well. The knife throwing scene and the trousers sequence was all well played and done with seriousness, creating more comedy. Diction, stage positioning and facial expressions all worked well.

Nikki Maine, Gladys

Nikki gave an excellent characterization, a display of naivety on certain points and in certain situations, alongside her own comic delivery. A clear spoken actress, deliberate and lively, with a flighty attitude as well. A delightful performance.

Stuart Seber, Prez

A well sung 'Figured It Out' which was well put across with all the necessary humour being brought out. Another actor with clear speech and delivery. Demonstrated a good sense of the nature of a union man, working the management and building up his colleagues enthusiasm around their discontent.

Eve MacDonald, Mabel

Although a smaller principal role, Eve brought a dose of comedy to her performance, giving some delightful expressions along with her lines.

Sian Oxley, Mae

A newcomer to MOS, but an experience performer on the stage, Sian displayed a good range of emotions, throwing her toys out of the pram when she realized Prez was using her.

Graham Johnstone, Hasler

Right from the start, Graham played Hasler as a hard-nosed boss, listening only to what he wanted to hear, discounting all other points of view with political management speak. His hurried movement about the stage gave the impression of a man with a lot on his mind, as it turned out, some of which was distinctly underhand.

Cat Thompson, Poopsie & Sarah Barnes, Brenda

Two cameo roles from Cat Thompson and Sarah Barnes that were well played and with good spirit in the ensemble scenes, and the many group songs. Disappointing that there wasn't more opportunity for them both to expand their characters, but that is the nature of the script.

Ensemble – Clare Ashton Tait, Liam Begley, Ian Cameron, Paul Cuttance, Sally Ellis, Greig Emmett, Mandy Hall, Kit Hobson, Laura Hobson, Phillippa Morris, Bob Nicholson, Jacqui O'Brien, Miranda Oliver, Frank Quick, Mike Robinson, Claire Sargent, Maureen Smith, Gareth Watkins

The large ensemble and chorus cast were excellent, tuneful and sang with precision throughout. They had a good balance of voices, and the opening number was first rate ensuring the show got off to good start and this continued throughout the performance. Special mention to Ian Cameron as Pop, who was a very understanding father with the comings and goings from his house. I particularly liked his desire to show off his stamp collection.

David Hazeldine, Musical Director

The orchestra did well under the direction of David Hazeldine, with a score which is deceptive in how easy it appears to the casual listener. At times, particularly in the quieter numbers, the sound was dominated by the drums, this is a common situation in amateur theatre. I think David had done a very commendable job.

Kay Lord, Director

It was obvious that a lot of hard work had gone into this production. The show had been well cast, with all the principals giving well rounded and distinct characterizations for their various roles. Stage positioning had been well laid out so that the whole audience was presented with a balanced performance. The Steamed Heat dance was a particular highlight and was superbly choreographed with very accomplished dancers. The choreography throughout was accomplished and gave all the performers the opportunity to shine with their dancing.