



Society : EBOS
Production : Kiss Me Kate
Date : 12th May 2010
Venue : Wilde Theatre, South Hill Park
Report by : Steve Bold, NODA Representative, District 14

Report

I would like to congratulate EBOS on another fine musical production after seeing their recent accomplished production of *Kiss Me Kate*. The music, acting and costumes as ever were fantastic. The singing, dancing and comedy were so good.

It is always a pleasure to be able to sit back and enjoy being taken into a world of music and laughter of a local theatre, and enjoy the facilities there. Director, Margery Jackson delivered a very accomplished interpretation, helped by the talented cast (on and off!) she had assembled. The scenes in the dressing rooms worked particularly well — thanks to Kate and Fred. The opening of Act two with "Too Dam Hot" was excellent and very well set. The two gangsters did a good job throughout and excelled themselves in "Brush up your Shakespeare". The two leads gave wonderful performances.

Anna McCormack, Hattie/Villager

This character has one great moment in this show and that is singing the opening number, 'Another Op'nin, Another Show'. This number has to have impact as it sets the scene for the rest of the show and although Anna gave a great performance together with the rest of the cast it felt longer than it really needed to be.

Phaedra Ashford, Lilli Vanessi (Kate)

This is quite a demanding role to take on but Phaedra made the most of it and gave an excellent performance. Her bitter/sweet relationship towards Fred Graham was well portrayed. There was some outstanding expressive acting and facial expressions. Her singing voice which ranged through all the emotions from the romantic 'So In Love' to the raucously demanding 'I Hate Men'.

Jessica Bennett, Lois Lane (Bianca)

Jessica had obviously got right inside this part and made it her own. Her young playfulness was excellent and fitted this role very well coming across in the numbers 'Why Can't You Behave' and 'Always True To You'. Almost ditzy but with an element of steel beneath her soft exterior.

Michael Hawk, Fred Graham (Petruccio)

This was a good presentation of this character, it had bite and his scenes with Lilli were a joy to watch, there was some real emotion between them as they fought each other. A powerful clear singing voice which complimented well with Lilli's. This role is also as demanding as Lilli's but Michael carried it off with aplomb, giving us a great relationship running through the show.

Dave Bennett, Bill Calhoun (Lucentio)

Another competent performance from Dave as Bill, he was a little more in the background than we have seen him in other shows, but he gave a great performance. His boyish charm helping him get through the continued losing gambling streak. Dave was a good supporting lead to Michael's Fred.

Dave Collier, Gremio & Flynt

As a potential suitor surrounded by the other characters, I always got the feeling that Dave was destined to be unlucky in his pursuit, but his movement and facial expressions gave his character significant life.

Stuart Woods, Hortensio/Riley

Good characterisations and again we had good diction and projection. General movement about the stage area was excellent and very physical, particularly during 'Too Darn Hot'. The singing was accomplished and clear - Well done.

Julian Hirst & Simon McCartan, 1st Man & 2nd Man

Clearly destined to be the fulcrum of the comedy in this production, Julian and Simon didn't disappoint. Their demeanour, their entrances, their movements everything was designed to bring a laugh. They were full of well delivered lines and their involvement in the 'show' within the show was excellent as they ineptly moved about the stage. A thoroughly enjoyable cameo from both men.

Brian Read, Harry Trevor (Baptista)

A fine fatherly figure from Brian as he desperately tried to marry one daughter off in order to facilitate the marriage of the other. An amusing put upon performance.

Duncan Hamilton, General Harrison Howell

Duncan gave a good interpretation of this character, his straight backed attitude twinned with an eye for the ladies. His costume was also very well done, thoroughly looking the part - A well-presented larger cameo role.

Tim Bell, Paul/Dancer

Although only a cameo role there significant moments for Tim, with dramatic entrances and lines. He also played his part in the ensemble scenes and group dances. A competent and controlled performance.

Chorus & Ensemble - Ken Gilliard, Pops/Villager, Frank Box, Ralph/Villager/Priest, Anne Hills, Wardrobe Lady/Villager/Servant to Petruchio, Kim Halliday, Wardrobe Lady/Quartet for Bianca, Kate Bettison, Wig Lady/Villager/Servant to Petruchio, Emily Dance, Wig Assistant/Villager/Servant to Petruchio, Catherine Turner, Wardrobe Lady/Villager/Dancer, Anne Maynard, Properties Lady/Inn Keeper's Wife, Tricia Bond, Wardrobe Lady/Villager, Rachel Healey, Dance Captain/Villager, John Butterworth, Electrician/Villager/Haberdasher, Ben Bevan, Cab Driver/Juggler/Dancer

This chorus entered into the spirit of this production with the large number of people populating the variety of crowd scenes, playing numerous characters. There was a high degree of singing and movement throughout the group, some members standing out more than others in their names roles, but chorus ensured the Wilde stage was filled with colour and movement throughout.

Andrew Cooper & Sue Lawson-Dick, Stage Manager, Stage Design & Crew

A fine set, with good scenery and design, clearly portraying the different periods of the show. Scene changes were also well done in the background of other scenes, although some were occasionally noisy.

Lighting

The lighting was well done in the most part, although I'm not sure if the cue was a little late on the opening of the show.

Sound

Also with the sound in the most part everything was clear without distortion, but the opening of some songs was lost as the levels were evened out.

Costumes

The costumes were excellent, especially the period costumes, both Kate and Petruchio's costumes were outstanding in their Shakesperian roles. Everything fitted well and added significantly to the overall enjoyment of the show and all credit must go to the wardrobe department.

James Manwaring, Musical Director

James was managing an extensive orchestra in the pit, spread over quite some area. They were obviously very well drilled as it did not appear that all had a clear view of his direction. Although the music was beautifully played throughout, there were occasions when it was difficult to hear the principals until the sound levels had been suitably evened out. All principals and chorus appeared to have been well rehearsed in the music with good entries and balance of voices.

Melinda Bennett, Choreographer

Some attractive and complicated choreographic routines had been devised by Melinda, she was clearly having fun with these dances. There was great involvement in the background as well as the principal dancers. Everything had also obviously been well rehearsed and danced, fitting the story line and action on stage.

Margery Jackson, Director

This was a well produced *Kiss Me, Kate*. It had impact, movement and good staging, making this an enjoyable theatrical experience. The show had been well cast, with all the principals being well characterised in their various roles, and the interaction between Lilli and Fred could not have been bettered. It was an enjoyable evening with life and vibrancy throughout.