



Society : East Berkshire Operatic Society  
Production : 'Nonsense 2 – The Second Coming'  
Date : 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
Venue : Pinewood Theatre  
Report by : Stephen Macvicar

## Report

Thank you very much for inviting me to EBOS's production of "Nonsense 2", written by Dan Goggin, recently at the Pinewood Theatre in the absence of your District Rep, Steve Bold. Thanks also to Kate Bettison for making the necessary ticketing arrangements.

### Synopsis

Nonsense 2 : The Second Coming is the sequel to the international hit Nonsense. The same five nuns are back on stage at Mt. Saint Helen's School (EBOS retained four of the original five) for what is billed as a "Thank you, Programme" for their supporters. Forced to work round the set of The Mikado (being presented next week by the local music society) they decide to stick to their successful formula and present a variety show.

### Review

This was a first and most enjoyable visit for me to both EBOS and the delightful Pinewood Theatre. You have a nice set-up with the social club next door where patrons can relax before, during and after the production. The Pinewood Theatre is an intimate venue with the auditorium decorated in a tasteful blue. The stage is quite small but ideal for a production of this nature. I was impressed with the Mikado set in the background which contained plenty of staging interest.

I think the main words that come to mind about this production are 'vibrant' and 'fun'. Apart from the fact that the whole show (as is the original) fairly nonsensical, the entire cast and musicians gave a stirring performance which let you leave your worries on the doorstep. Under the direction of Barry Buckingham, the production looked slick and well rehearsed. The cast were very 'professional' and executed well both the extremely witty script and the lighthearted score. Some of the dialogue was racy to say the least with various double entendres being very much on the smutty side. Musical Director Graham Hix not only marshaled the cast musically but played Keyboards. Along with Drummer Chris Frost, both gentlemen donned priests' costumes to enter into the spirit of things. Whilst the music will probably not stick in my mind for too long, there is no denying that there was variety in the production numbers. We were treated to an opening which contained some very pleasant harmony and continued with genres such as the uplifting, puppetry, gypsy style, diva style, emotional, can-can, gospel, sing-a-long and rousing. It was an impressive collection of styles indeed.

The cast of five worked well as a team. Four of these ladies were reprising roles from the original production. There appeared to be no egos and nothing other than a really positive team spirit.

Technically, everything seemed to flow smoothly. It is probably not the most demanding of shows from a technical point of view but the Lighting plot, the Sound balance, the Costumes and the Props all were suitable and effective.

I liked your souvenir programme. It was fairly simple and easy reference. It contained a sufficiency of show information and was accompanied by some society information. Cast photos and biographies are very welcome too, it helps to assess relative experience of the performers and creative team. It was a pity to see that there was no significant mention of

NODA within the programme other than the crest (as this would give you a great chance of entering for future regional and national awards) If you wished to include some information for future programmes, I or Steve would be happy to provide some suitable scribe.

This production of Nunsense 2 was a true team effort which was received very well by myself and an enthusiastic audience. Congratulations to a very talented Cast and Creative Team.

There were strong performances amongst the principals and I shall make a few comments on the players; in programme order

**Sister Mary Regina – Anne Maynard** – Anne was very relaxed in the role of Mother Superior. I think the biggest compliment I can pay Anne is that, as soon as Anne came on stage and delivered her first lines, we as an audience knew we were in safe hands. The drunken, bitchy duet with Sister Hubert was well delivered.

**Sister Mary Hubert – Teri Austen** – Perhaps a smaller role than some of the others but eventually Teri gets her chance to shine in the fantastic gospel number 'There's Only One Way' and this she did with spirit and enthusiasm. As previously mentioned, the drunken number also showcased Teri's abilities.

**Sister Robert Anne – Anna McCormack** – Anna came across as a strong and very watchable performer who commands an impressive jazzy voice. I reference 'I Got Pizazz' and 'I Am Here To Stay' as proof of Anna's vocal talents.

**Sister Mary Amnesia – Rachel Baker** – This is an absolute gem of a role for a character actress and I thought Rachel was wonderful. Not only does Rachel possess an impressive high soprano voice but her characterisation was very well judged. It must be difficult to retain that scatty, stupid and distant expression throughout the evening but Rachel managed.

**Sister Mary Leo – Emma Haycox** – Emma is the only performer who wasn't in the original production but you wouldn't have known it. Emma impressed in her 'Fame' style ballet number 'The Prima Ballerina'. Mary Leo is another character who deserves some more solo time on stage and whilst Emma's top notes are still developing, I really enjoyed her performance.

Once again thank you for inviting me to the Pinewood Theatre and best wishes for your future productions. Hopefully, I will get a chance to see you again soon and if I can be of any assistance at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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