



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Society : Potters Bar Theatre Company
Production : EVITA
Date : Saturday 26th November 2016
Venue : Wyliotts Theatre.
Report by : Michael Monk

Show Report

The danger with Evita is that it can easily seem like an apology for its heroine, as we follow the rise of Evita Duarte from ambitious teenager to wife of Argentina's President Juan Peron, we are constantly reminded of her charisma, ability to work a crowd and capacity to get things done. Eva Peron was also a vital part of a military dictatorship that crushed opposition.

Director – JOHN HEBDEN – is to be congratulated on directing a superb rendition of, what must be, a very difficult challenge to amateur theatre groups. Set Design by ALASTAIR WOODGATE and supplied by GREEN ROOM PRODUCTIONS was exemplary, with a superb balcony setting.

Musical Director – JAMES REYNOLDS – A new name I have not come across before. James, although next door all evening with his band, produced a great sound which is so much more difficult when not in the auditorium. All the principal and ensemble singing was strong with good diction, and the balance between band and stage was just perfect.

Choreographer – SHARON BASSINGTHWAITE – Excellent and effective choreography throughout, which matched the skills of the company on stage. Dance Sequences were crisp and energetic. The musical chairs number was ingenious!

All the various scenes moved quickly from one to another led by Stage Manager COLIN RICARDO, ably assisted by crew DAVID BOTTOMLEY, JON CHARTRES, BRIAN HAMSHERE, TONY KHUBULL, COLIN SMALE, ALASTAIR WOODGATE, JEFF HAMMOND and CAST.

Lighting by CAMERON BIGGS was well executed with mood lighting giving the right ambience throughout. I particularly felt the lighting for Eva's 'Don't Cry for Me' was perfection.

Sound Design & Operation by PHIL STANNARD was all on cue and the balance between orchestra pit and performer was executed very well indeed.

Costumes – THE COSTUME WORKSHOP, Isle of Wight and Managed by DEBBIE BELL and SHARON LOTTARI with Dressers DAVE ADAMS and JULIA ELLIS-HALL assisting. Everyone looked splendid.

Properties – LINDA WILLIAMSON – All the props and set dressings were well managed and appropriate.

Eva – KIM LEESON-DAVIS – Another exemplary performance from this very experienced performer. You tackled this role with both great ferocity and fragility. I particularly enjoyed your renditions of the iconic 'Don't Cry for Me Argentina' and 'You Must Love Me', which was so moving it brought a tear to my eye. Congratulations Kim.

Che – JOHN ISAAC – A nervous start vocally but confidence grew in spades. Your revolutionary narration had just the right amount of devilish humour and sardonic wit. I felt a more military costume may have been a little more convincing.

Magaldi – RICHARD JACKSON – The first rung on Eva's ladder! You gave the Tango/Crooner singer just the right ambience and personality for this small but supportive role.

Peron – DERRECK CROSS – A strong performance taking command of the stage as well as bringing dramatic depth to all the scenes with Eva. Good vocals throughout.

Mistress – BELLE DILETO – What a beautiful and graceful rendition of Another Suitcase in Another Hall. Excellent diction and the simplistic staging was just perfect. I look forward to future roles Belle plays to see how she develops.

Your programme by JENNY COLLEDGE was beautifully presented and very informative.

Thank you, Roger, once again for your very kind welcome and hospitality.

Best wishes

Michael Monk
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