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Society : Potters Bar Theatre Company
Production : OLIVER
Date : 27th April 2017
Venue : Wylyyots Theatre
Report by : Michael Monk

Show Report

Thank you for your kind invitation to see your recent production of Oliver. Walking into the auditorium and seeing the impressive set from SCENIC PROJECTS gave a good ambience for this iconic, much loved British musical from Lionel Bart. I knew that I was in for an evening of dark humour and wonderful characters.

Director/Choreographer – AMAND LING, Choreographer/Assistant Director - DEBRA CONSTANTINOUBELL are to be congratulated on a very slick and well-rehearsed production. In all the productions of Oliver I have seen over the years, and they add up to quite a few, I have to say that these children (Isabelle Milton, Emily Apps, Anushree Bhattacharjee, Jessica Brady, Sebastian Brown, Coco Cousin-Brown, George Cross, Amelie Green, Grace Jackson, Alice Johnston, Lola Jones, Daniel Phillips and Abby Plaut) are the best I have ever seen. So well drilled in all their routines and their singing was exemplary. They were always acting whilst not being involved centre stage in the Workhouse and Fagin's den scenes. You made excellent use of all the set levels enabling all the ensemble and children to be seen at all times.

Musical Director – ELEANOR JACKSON assisted by ALLISON PARRIS – gave us a very good orchestra which only enhanced the production. The principal, company singing, including all the children's numbers, were very good indeed with clear diction and great energy. The balance between orchestra and stage was just perfect. I particularly liked the additional street sellers singing during the overture and the additional harmonies in the ensemble numbers.

Stage Management – FRANK BUNDLE assisted by VICTORIA SANTAMARIA-CANNAFORD with crew JAMES BENTALL, SAM BARNES, DANIEL PADGET, GARY COLLEDGE, KIM LEESON DAVIS – All the various scenes moved quickly from one to another with all entrances and exits used effectively.

Lighting – CAMERON BIGGS – was very well executed with area and mood lighting giving the right ambience throughout. I did feel, however, Fagin's den was rather dark the first time as we could not see all the faces too well.

Sound design and operation – ROGER KNIGHT - all on cue. The balance between orchestra pit and performer was executed very well indeed.

The attention to detail for all the props and set dressing from LINDA WILLIAMSON, CHRISTINA TAKKIDES & CAER RICE-SMITH was exemplary and all good for the period.

Costumes – COSTUME STORE – Managed very well by JENNY COLLEDGE and SUZANNE SIVE assisted by Sewing Bee Team of LISA LARGE, BABS PHILPOTT, GERALDINE WEINHART, CHRISTINE GRAY & GILLIAN RICKARDS – were all very suitable for everyone’s character and the period.

Make-Up & Hair – LISA JONES, CHRISTINA LAURIE & BABS PHILPOTT – what a busy night you must have had! Everyone looked perfect in their different character make-up and hair and having all the additional children to do too.

Oliver Twist – EOIN BRODERICK & (FINN GEOGHEGAN) Eoin gave a very confident performance from someone so young. Excellent movement and singing skills, ‘Where is Love’ in particular. You worked very well with Dodger, Bet, Nancy & Fagin.

Mr Bumble – JONATHAN PETTITT – Excellent characterisation throughout and a beautiful rendition of ‘Boy for Sale’ with lovely tone and control. Worked very well with Widow Corney in their two cameo scenes.

Widow Corney – SHARON LOTTARI – Strong performance throughout and good clear vocals. Excellent comedic skills with great facial expressions! Interacted very well with Bumble. Excellent use of Bumbles Staff!

Mr & Mrs Sowerberry – MICHAEL WARE & LIZ GOLA – Both gave excellent cameo characterisations and worked very well with each other in their cameo scenes. Vocals good for ‘That’s Your Funeral. I felt Oliver pushing Mrs Sowerberry into the Coffin would have been a lot funnier when he was escaping the parlour.

Charlotte – VICTORIA ABSOLON - – Very nice cameo role. Good support with the Sowerberry’s & Noah.

Noah Claypole/Knife Grinder – BEN MARKS – Nice performance as Noah worked well with Oliver & Charlotte in the one Scene. Good support vocals in ‘Who will buy’ as the Knife Grinder.

The Artful Dodger – LEWIS ELLIOTT & (JAKE GALE) Lewis gave a very good and confident performance with great energy. Good movement, vocals and a good leader for all the gang.

Fagin – JOSHUA PLAUT – Although a younger than usual Fagin, Joshua gave a strong and accomplished performance. Excellent Stage presence throughout - good chemistry with all your other cast members, especially with the gang of boys and girls. I particularly enjoyed your rendition of ‘Reviewing the Situation’.

Nancy – SARAH BREALEY – A delightful performance. Great singing voice, heard every lyric from start to finish, and excellent Stage presence throughout. I was rather surprised at the tempo of ‘Fine life’ - rather too fast! Very good chemistry with all your other cast members especially with Bill, Fagin and the boys. I particularly enjoyed your powerful and moving rendition of ‘As Long as He Needs Me’. Excellent choice of Dress too!

Bet – CHERYLL HIGGINS – Worked well in all the scenes with Nancy and you sang strongly throughout.

Bill Sykes – DAVID BOTTOMLEY - A very nice, strong, commanding performance throughout. Good rendition of 'My Name' certainly would not want to meet you down a dark alley! Perhaps a little more facial make-up to look even more menacing would have finished your look brilliantly.

Bullseye – Ralph – Ralph behaved impeccably throughout all his scenes whilst on stage. However, I did feel that French bulldogs were not around in early Victorian London.

Mr Brownlow – JORGE FRUTUSO – Confident performance – Hairstyle was too modern for the period. Facial sideburns were the only thing needed, like Mr Bumble!

Mrs Bedwin – JENNY COLLEDGE - Supported Mr. Brownlow very well and sang your small solo confidently and with clear diction.

Dr Grimwig – COLIN RICARDO – A good cameo performance for such a small role.

Old Sally – LINDA BEADLE – A small but very important role revealing Oliver's identity. A confident performance and you died very well indeed!

Rose Seller – MIYA JONES, Strawberry Seller – VICTORIA ABSOLON, Milkmaids – TRACY CARTER, CAROLINE DUKER, LISA LARGE & BECKY PANTHER, Long Song Seller – TOM FIELD - All sang very well together as a group with all harmonies coming through.

The programme by Jenny Colledge was beautifully presented and very informative. Please consider entering your poster and programme in this year's competitions.

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

Best wishes

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Regional Representative
NODA London District 10

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