

**Crazy For You - Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society at the Civic Theatre**

**(27<sup>th</sup> September)**

Review by Cheryl Rogers

‘Crazy For You’, a colourful, lively Gershwin song and dance–fest. This light weight, fluffy confection has no real storyline. Boy meets girl, they put on a show to save a bankrupt theatre, fall out because of mistaken identity and all comes right in the end, we’ve seen it all before in some guise or other. What this show is all about is the dancing and the many Gershwin hit songs of the 1930s, there are plenty of both.

This show, first and foremost needs a first class troupe of tappers and this week CAODS showed us how it’s done. Their line-up of ten beautifully costumed, wigged and made up ‘hoofers’ were immaculate in both their appearance and their style. Their faces were alight with enthusiasm and their arms, legs and feet were in total unison as far as I could see. They were so well rehearsed and taught that I don’t think I’ve seen a better set of dancers in an amateur show for many years. They deserve congratulations for all the hard work they must have put in, this kind of precision doesn’t happen by chance.

The songs came fast and furiously, too many to list here but ‘Someone to Watch Over Me’ and ‘But Not For Me’ were sung beautifully by Christie Hooper who played the leading lady, Polly. She is a good actress, pretty and delicate with a strong voice and she executed these songs easily and faultlessly – lovely. Her leading man, Bobby, played by Henri De Lausan also sang and danced some excellent numbers ‘They can’t Take That Away From Me’ and ‘Nice work if you Can Get It’ among others. He is one to watch. Although in my opinion, too young for this part, his singing, dancing and delivery of a good line, ensures that we’ll be seeing him again in future musicals. He performed a brilliant duet with Kevin Richards, as the impresario Bela Zangler. Kevin is no stranger to comedy and his timing was spot on, he can tell a good gag. This brings me to another aspect of this show, it was genuinely funny, jokes ran all through the script, the audience were laughing out loud.

There were many cameo roles in this production, we saw some experienced performers and some with perhaps not quite with the same acting abilities but hey, this is amateur theatre. However, Karen Kelleher was splendid as Irene Roth, her song; ‘Naughty Baby’ was a delight. This girl has legs up to her armpits and can use them to great effect in a sexy routine! Also the three main cowboys played by John Cox, David Everest-Ring and Tom Harper sang well, in harmony, obviously enjoying their individual characterisations. The big company numbers, notably ‘I got Rhythm’ were colourful and zipped along. Just one small personal note, was I the only audience member to be disappointed that the girls only wore their dazzling showgirl costumes for the blink of an eye leading up to the finale? I would have liked to have seen them for longer even if that was a hard task with the tall feathered headdresses. A good show then, if a little frothy and a great band to do justice to the music.

‘The Witches of Eastwick’ is next – very exciting - I just can’t wait to see what they do with that!

Photo by Christopher Yorke-Edwards