

Chelmsford AODS - Crazy For You

Director Sallie Warrington; MD Patrick Tucker

Civic Theatre, Chelmsford - 27 September 2013

It was always going to be a pleasing experience for me to see this show as I've been an ardent fan of Gershwin's music for as long as I can remember. This show is based on the Gershwin brother's 1930's musical, *Girl Crazy* and features a number of songs from other productions also such as *Lady be Good*, and wonderful songs they are too! CAODS did the production proud and the show is one which has never been performed at The Civic before, so audiences were indeed in for a treat.

From the start of the rather brassy overture, 'quality' was the word that came to mind. The accomplished orchestra did well although rather too loud for a couple of places of underscoring. The sets were large - even for the Civic and a couple of hitches were encountered but needless to say, easily overcome by the expert backstage crew. Wigs and costumes were amazing and I was pleased to see that the cast did not wear a different costume in every scene! The choreography for a production like this needs to be masterful and we were treated to many highlights in this respect, my favourite being 'Stiff Upper Lip'. But every number was executed with accuracy and aplomb - well done especially to the dancing ladies and of course, to the choreographer who also directed the show. There are many funny lines and the director achieved excellent timing in their delivery, gaining many laughs throughout. The cast displayed much talent both in terms of their singing and dancing, remembering the complicated and varied routines ensuring immaculate presentation. The cameo roles deserve special mention here as the parts of Lottie, Everett, Tess, Patsy, Patricia and Eugene were all superbly cast. Henri de Lausun gave a youthful and confident interpretation of Bobby which was displayed especially in the mirror image scene with Zangler (Kevin Richards), who also gave good account of his character. Christie Hooper, in her diminutive frame, provided a big performance, showing expertise in her dances and sweetness of voice. Irene (Karen Kelleher) and Lank (Jonathan Lloyd-Gane) complimented each other's diametrically opposing characteristics culminating in the raunchy 'Naughty Baby' although not quite raunchy enough for me!

The sizeable company clearly enjoyed every moment they were on stage and this spilled over into the very appreciative audience and the society would have been well placed to say to anyone not seeing this show that it was indeed 'Crazy For You' to have missed it!

Eric Smart