

Anything Goes Civic Theatre

IT'S back to the '30s with a vengeance at Chelmsford's Civic Theatre all this week with the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society giving their all in Anything Goes.

True, to the standards of modern musicals P G Wodehouse and Guy Bolton's book is pretty tame stuff, but it provides the perfect peg for Cole Porter's memorable score of winner after winner.

Despite some first night lighting problems and unscheduled halts Ray Jeffrey's production has the punch, excitement and stunning visual qualities that we have come to expect from him.

In the lead role of Reno Sweeney, Rachel Sherlock gives a powerful performance playing her Annie Oakley of the 1930s plus a dash of religious conversion with Kevin Abrey a true Wodehouse fop as Sir Evelyn Oakleigh.

Barry Hester deservedly scores another hit as the fast-talking Billy Crocker with the girl of his choice, Hope Harcourt played with charm but insufficient projection by Elizabeth Shaw.

It was a joy to see Audrey Hinton playing Hope's mum with such a feel for the period and Patrick Tucker, for once switching to a comedy role, as the even faster-talking moonface Martin.

PETER ANDREWS



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