

The thought of an Amateur society producing A Chorusline to the level required is one which always makes me feel uneasy. Even knowing the standard of CAODS membership, I was still a little nervous.

However, I had no cause to be because the society smashed it. With a full line of strong, competent performers, my doubts were quickly quelled. The open stage set was beautiful in all its theatrical scruffiness, complete with the line of mirrors. The use of the lighting rig was also mesmerising, creating intimate moments as well as giving us a taste of theatrical life.

With such a large and strong cast, it is impossible to name everyone but for me there were a few stand outs, Lauren Byford as Richie, making the once male role her own with great success, Robyn Gowers as sassy Sheila, never letting her character drop even in the larger numbers and David Gillett as Alan who shone throughout and was clearly was one of the strongest dancers on the line.

But it was the rawness of the Act 2 monologue from Andrew Harding as Paul that for me nailed it. This is a very long an emotional piece and Andrew delivered it from the heart – it is rare these days that I am brought to tears in the theatre, but I found myself on the brink of them at the end of his speech.

There were a few occasions in solo numbers where the overuse of arms and gestures distracted from the whole performance but these, I felt were down to the performers trying to put emotion into their numbers physically rather than using their face and body language. But these were minimal rather than a recurring thing.

Having Gareth Barton as Director Zach in the auditorium for the majority of the show, worked well and the drilling of the dance routines was impeccable, especially in the finale 'One' where every leg was at the same height, every arm perfectly positioned. It was clear that Director and Choreographer Sallie Warrington had spent a great deal of time working with the company to achieve such perfection. I particularly liked the 'rehearsal' routine behind the dialogue between Zach and Cassie, beautifully set and delivered.

This was a 5 Star show throughout, and I encourage everyone to see it if they can before it closes at the end of the week.