

Braintree and Witham Times Review

KISS ME KATE

This was a production in which the Operatic Society's established names took a back seat. Instead a sprinkling of new or newish names headed the cast list to illustrate a society in vigorous health.

Young actors Ollie Barrett, Ben Huish, Joe Gray and Mark Ellis attacked central roles with aplomb. But this is a musical that gives its best lines to the women – and Julie Codling and Robyn Gowers did not waste them. Both in their first WAOS production, they took full advantage of Cole Porter's literary gems to captivate the audience. Codling lets herself go and positively snarls in I Hate Men while Gowers drags every ounce of life out of Always True To You In My Fashion. David Slater is the one familiar face and he cements it all together with an assured performance in the lead role of Fred Graham.

The ensemble cast gives full value to the many well known songs, such as Another Op'nin' Another Show, Wunderbar, So In Love and Too Darn Hot, the latter featuring Huish in the solo role. And it is a show that gives a higher profile than usual to the dancers, with a number of strong routines in the capable hands (and feet) of Rachel Ings, Emma Sayers, Emily Dixon, Julie Slater, Rosie Clarke, Charlotte Watling, Olivia Bentley and Kelly Rowell.

The show was dedicated to Helen Temperley, a society member for 25 years, who died in May, aged 38.

Publicity photos taken by Great Notley Photographic Club at a costume rehearsal at Witham Public Hall

Report by Ron Fosker