

NODA Review

Oliver!

Performed at Witham Public Hall on the 29th October 2013

Director and Choreographer: Nikki Mundell-Poole

Musical Director: Geoff Osborne

This was a really excellent production full of life, colour and commitment from a very large cast. The entire stage in the large ensemble numbers was filled with both the young people and adults all involved in very well drilled choreographic routines. Everyone on the stage was totally involved with putting these lively numbers across in a really effective and stunning form.

We had some excellent principals cast in this show in each and every character, and a well balanced chorus; also cameo roles all adding to the high standard overall.

A delightful Oliver played by winsome Charlie Smith to a very confident Max Lenoir as the Artful Dodger together with Fagin's gang were confident and a pleasure to watch. Fagin played by George Lambeth was the nearest lookalike I have seen to Ron Moody and his costume and hat and make up were spot on in every respect. George's facial expressions and manner added much to this central character in the production. All the musical numbers in The Thieves Kitchen were enjoyable and well timed.

Nancy, played by Robyn Harrington, looked so right in this part; very sensitively played in her dialogue and affection towards Oliver but a defiant side came through in standing up to Fagin and the burly Bill Sykes played by Patrick Willis. His song "My Name" was quite a modern rendition of this number, which I liked, part sung-part spoken. Maybe the song was not as heavy as it could have been but we all got the message he was a "Bad Un".

The pairing of Mr Bumble and Widow Corney from Tim Clarke and Liz Watson was fun. Mr Bumble made the most of his constant indigestion to good effect. The pair played their characters very much in "Pantomime Mode" but lots of experience came through from two seasoned players. Well done.

The Undertakers scene with Mr & Mrs Sowerberry played by Deborah Anderson and Richard Herring together with bully-boy Noah Claypole and the put upon Charlotte was very well played with great timing. "Who will Buy", a very well known number, was confidently sung and well staged.

All the children and young people lit the stage with each entry. Great costumes and sets, together with super lit sets and sound, added so much to a very polished performance all round. I really liked the final scene, which was Fagin and Artful Dodger on London Bridge going off into the sunset. It gave a delightful end to the production.

Good tempi from Geoff and his Orchestra (if a TAD loud here and there) making all the music push along at an infectious pace.

Well done for all the work on and off the stage from Nikki and Geoff and all the Production team for a show to be very proud of, and a most enjoyable evening's entertainment.

Review by Ann Platten, NODA East, District 11

