

SOCIETY: ENFIELD LIGHT ODS
PRODUCTION: SINGIN' IN THE RAIN
DATE: 24 October 2008
VENUE: WYLLYOTTS CENTRE
REPORT BY: PAUL M HOLGATE

This was a most entertaining production of a technically demanding show which was well-suited to the company's talents.

Musical Direction under Mark Newport with the support of a well selected band maintained a perfect balance between the pit and the stage.

Direction from Gail Ashwell was precise and well-paced. Principals had been given the chance for a lot of character development. Chorus looked and sounded good. Blocking during the film studio scenes was very nicely done. The pack needed to be further downstage in the opening scene to give the impression of a larger crowd. Entrances and exits were well handled. Musical numbers were all excellent. 'Beautiful Girl' with a strong solo from Nic Corden worked very well.

Lighting was sound. The opening scene would have benefitted from warmer tones, the finale to act one required to be cooler. Some scenes, notably Fit as a Fiddle, might have been better served had they been spotted.

The film inserts looked as though they were a lot of fun to produce and were very well realised.

Using projected images in some scenes was an excellent idea. The postcard view of downtown LA was noticeably out of period. The 'Monumental Pictures' logo looked too modern for the 1920s – perhaps RF was very forward thinking.

Costumes conformed to period including footwear. Don should have lost his red socks directly after 'Fit as a Fiddle' Kathy's white handkerchief dress was somewhat unflattering, possibly the hemline should have been higher. Surely Dexter should have used a megaphone rather than a bullhorn? The plastic umbrellas looked out of place in the act I finale but worked better in the final montage. Excellent costuming for 'Beautiful Girl'.

Cosmo's walk through the paper flat during 'Make 'em Laugh' was telegraphed although brilliantly executed – much better to bring it on stage just before it is going to be used. Moses, with a great cameo from Caroline Cody was a highlight of the show.

David Stone as Don Lockwood had an easy air which suited the part well. He appeared more comfortable with singing and acting than dancing although he made a good impression in Fit as a Fiddle and Broadway Melody as well as the title number.

Verity Stansall was an outstanding Kathy and gave an exceptional performance of You are my Lucky Star.

Jason Thorpe gave a pleasing and energetic performance as Cosmo Brown, his powerful voice unaffected by the physical exertions of a show-stopping performance of 'Make 'em Laugh'.

Good Morning had great charm –the friendship between the three characters utterly believable.

Creating a nice contrast to the three other principal's relaxed style, Helen White gave a compulsive interpretation of Lina Lamont, holding the stage well in 'What's Wrong with Me and displaying a good sense of comedy timing.

Also worthy of note were Olly Lockwood as Roscoe Dexter and Greta Jenkins as Dora Bailey who were both nicely in character.

Martin Ibister was a brilliantly charismatic R F Simpson in a very promising company debut.

The programme was clear and easy to read but while having a list of musical numbers omitted a breakdown of scenes. Good photographs of the cast and rehearsals as always. Thank you for including the Noda crest.

Many thanks for your invitation and your hospitality. I look forward to your next presentation.