National Operatic & Dramatic Association London Region

Society : Younger Generation

Production : Talented

Date : 28th August 2014

Venue : Ashcroft Theatre

Report by : Tony Sweeney

**General**

This is a group that has provided a platform for young talent in South London for 26 years launching many into a love of amateur theatre and continues to find an amazing array of talent to draw on. A cast of nearly 70 gave a series of little scenarios al la gang show style based on well known talent and game shows since the 1960’s there are some clear parallels here which made the show work on a number of levels. From opportunity knocks to the voice this was truly a homage to the genre and a highly entertaining evening for the rather sparse audience who really appreciated it.

**Players**

The philosophy of the group is that there are no stars and everyone plays a part which they did. I did find myself wondering how many former members have gone onto other groups. You could not fail to appreciate both the energy and sheer hard work that every member of the cast put in to make the show go so well. There were a few real highlight however that I feel deserve to be singled out.

The young girl who played the piano to accompany herself in “The man with the child in his eyes” had a fantastic voice. Her mike failed at the opening of the song but like a true pro she carried on unhindered which impressed us all. The mike kicked in mid song so we could then really fully appreciate her talent.

The Torvill and Dean inspired ballet of Bolero was fantastic, the use of roller skates being a nice touch. As a piece of visual performance art it was of the highest quality and shows what can be done. Similarly the Black Swan inspired ballet to a Shakespeare’s Sister track was extremely well done having both atmosphere and impact. The contrast between both dancers was again visually stunning.

The finale opened with an exceptional rendition of “I dreamed a dream” again the lead singer had a strong and melodious voice that really hit the spot. The way the song grew was also a well worked piece of theatre.

A rendition of “Suddenly Seymour” showcased yet another exceptional voice and the girl delivering it was clearly comfortable as well as talented. An exceptionally well delivered song.

The rendition of “Losing my mind” the Streisand classic had both presence and emotion making it a real highlight.

A tap dance routine again worked well showcasing the talent on show well.

**Director**

Trudy Paine has a wealth of experience with the group form performing to directing and has really honed her craft. This was a fantastic example of her work which has become more polished over the years. She has great vision and the ability to use the performers with a range of ability to maximum effect. The problems with the mikes must have been an irritation for her.

Musical Director

Neil Shrimpton led a small band well, providing a good balance between the music and the singers (mikes permitting). Supplemented by recorded music it all worked well together except for a delay in the recording of

**Choreographer**

Although no one person is named a choreographer this aspect of the show was of the highest standard throughout. Some excellent large scale dance routines using simple steps and giving great visual impact were used throughout reinforcing the energy and enthusiasm which was really apparent from the start. With such a range of dance skills on show the choreography acknowledged this variety but used everyone to the best of their ability.

**Stage Management**

With so many cast members and so many costume changes the stage management needed to be well thought out and slick and it was. Everyone of the cast knew exactly where they had to be at any one time and entrances and exits were done seamlessly.

**Sound**

The mikes really did not support the performances with some not working or coming in late it is clearly an area of concern that will need to be improved.

**Lighting**

The lighting was extremely effective and with the lack of a set really worked to give the show atmosphere. Some good effects, a spotlight depicting a broken pane etc were integrated well into the shows action.

**Make-up**

The make up worked well throughout being both subtle and appropriate.

**Set Design**

A minimal set which was needed to support the vast variety of displays was used well. Props like chairs helped redefine the visual impact.

**Props**

The props were in the main worked well. A routine involving canes got a little ragged at times but overall the props worked well.

**Costumes**

We saw a stunning and comprehensive range of costumes which all worked well to support each of the myriad of sections. Each member of the cast must have had a number of costume changes throughout the evening which all helped create the atmosphere and energy of the show.

**Programme**

An interesting programme, which reflected the group’s philosophy of no stars by having only uncaptioned photos of the cast with a separate list. It might have been good to have the directors vision explained as this helps the audience really appreciate the overall concept.

**Front of house**

The front of house was provided by Fairfield Halls and as you would expect was very professional.

Tony Sweeney

Regional Representative

NODA London