

London Region



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Society : Cygnet Players
Production : Legally Blonde
Date : 8th September 2016
Venue : Putney Arts Theatre
Report by : Tony Sweeney

Show Report

General

A show that was well cast, with some really talented performers in every role. This was a joy. The energy levels and enthusiasm were kept at high throughout with some amazing dancing which really added to the excitement of what is a really great show. The accents worked well and the whole feel of the show was one of joyful exuberance.

The show that elevated Sheridan Smith to star status has stood the test of time and is one that is ideal for the amateur arena with some catchy songs and characters you can get your teeth into as performers.

Players -Leading

Rachel Kitchen (Elle) was ideal for the role and her transformation from a blonde airhead to a strong savvy woman really gave the show backbone and was delivered to perfection. She has an excellent voice and is a very accomplished dancer which all added to the character.

Mark Stanford (Emmett) played quite an unusual role as someone entrenched in the system who is liberated and enriched through contact with Elle. The costume transformation only served to reinforce this and his character development was subtle but convincing. An excellent singer his was a major contribution.

Kate Chesworth (Paulette) as the slightly older hairdresser that Elle befriends gave us an excellent piece of character acting. Her strong and confident singing voice was used to good effect especially in "Ireland" and her interactions with Kyle had real charm.

Andy Lingfield (Callahan) as the senior lawyer who acted as tutor and was clearly a man of great influence gave another strong character real credibility. His stature clearly helped but his whole persona seemed to add to the characters presence. His song "Blood in the Water" was performed well and really helped define the character.

Hannah McKenna-Vickerstaff (Margot), Siana French (Serena) and Anna Howard (Pillar) as Elle's close friends worked well both individually and together in a sort of mini dance troupe. Their performances helped ground the show on the west coast with its relaxed approach to life and acted as a real contrast to the stuffy halls of Harvard.

Nino Stylianou (Warner) as Elle's boyfriend whose rejection spurs her to action was again good in the part with a hint of the shallow and self-centred in his performance. His duet "Serious" was delivered well and really kick started the plot.

Melanie Willis (Vivienne) as the slightly villainous Vivienne again was strong in the part projecting the character well. She enjoys an excellent stage presence and is clearly an accomplished performer.

Kirsty Rome (Brooke) had an amazing voice which really stood out. Some excellent dancing only added to what was an excellent performance all round.

Serge Kluit (Kyle) as the wonderfully camp Kyle gave us a superb comic performance which was over the top and which perfectly portrayed the character.

Rosie Orchard (Enid), Deborah Lowe (Kate) and Jack Beedle (Carlos) also did well in supporting roles delivering the variety the show needed to reflect the width of society Elle encountered on her journey.

Support

A large and well drilled chorus provided real support throughout adding to the shows impact.

Director

Matthew Eberhardt used all the elements well, blessed with a strong cast and a flexible set he conjured together a highly memorable show which everyone appreciated. Good visuals meant it was a spectacular throughout. His was an excellent piece of vision translated into a lively and entertaining show.

Musical Director

Steven Geraghty led a small band who gave us a strong and supportive level of music that worked well and blended well with the singers on stage.

Choreographer

Della Bhujoo devised some excellent dance routines that the cast executed brilliantly and were always in sync. She clearly has a good eye and a talent for converting her ideas into reality.

Stage Management

With such a large cast the stage management had to be well thought out. A multitude of scene changes were handled well and did not interrupt the flow of the action. All entrances and exits were well worked out and the action moved from individual to chorus action almost seamlessly.

Sound

The sound was well balanced and clear enabling the audience to really appreciate the performer's efforts.

Lighting

The theatre though small was equipped with an excellent lighting rig and this allowed some useful visual effects to be included again adding to the shows overall impact.

Make-up

The make up helped define the characters and worked well in helping deliver the visual impact. Never too much it was pitched at the right level to underline the characters.

Set Design

A single set used throughout which proved both flexible and practical. Well built and solid it was designed for and coped with every situation. Having a large clear area in the middle of the stage allowed the dancing to be lavish and lively owing to a good balance in the space used.

Props

The props were used well and all seemed to fit into the show's setting adding to the overall feel well.

Costumes

The costumes were both stunning and reinforced the characters on show well. Elle's pink stilettos in act one being a case in point and the change to more sedate footwear a subtle reinforcement of the characters transition.

The costumes for both the inmates and guards in the prison scene really looked authentic again adding to the shows impact.

Programme

The programme provided a lot of information on the performers again adding positively to the audience experience. The article by the director helped us gain insight into his approach.

Front of house

Those charged with the front of house duties were both efficient and welcoming putting everyone at their ease and helping create the right atmosphere. They dealt well with latecomers and given this was a sell out performance made the overall process smooth and seamless.

Tony Sweeney
Regional Representative
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