

National Operatic & Dramatic Association London Region

Society: ROS StageWorks Summer School

Production: High School Musical JR

Date: Saturday 30th July 2016

Venue: Winston Churchill Hall

Report by: Michael Monk

Show Report

Disney's High School Musical, brought to us first on screen in January 2006, centres on the blossoming relationship between Troy, a high school jock, and Gabriella, the new smart girl at school. Their relationship and their surprise decision to audition together for the school show are thwarted by the school's current leading lady, Sharpay, and Troy and Gabriella's well-meaning friends. Finally, they find a way to be themselves and are rewarded with the lead roles in the school show.

It is unusual to see a production where, instead of rehearsing for many months, the young cast only auditioned and began rehearsing last Saturday and here we were, seven days later, sitting in the auditorium watching the completed production.

Director and Choreographer ANN HERTLER-SMITH, assisted by Drama Coach HELEN BAILEY, is to be congratulated on a very slick and well-rehearsed production. The various scenes moved quickly from one to another with cast displaying confidence and excellent stage presence. All entrances and exits were clean and tight, especially with all those props! Considering the whole production is conceived in just one week only is a true credit to the whole production team, cast and all supportive backstage teams.

Musical Direction, in the very experienced hands of GRAHAM THOMSON, assisted by RICHARD FAIRHEAD and ALAN HEYES only enhanced the production more. With so many children to teach all the music in such a short time the singing was very good, with clear diction and some good harmonies coming through. The balance between orchestra and stage could have been made better if more time was allowed technically.

Stage Director STEVE STROUD and Stage Manager RICHARD KESSEL both contributed to the smooth running of the show.

Lighting design by JOHN CUDE and Follow-spot Operator ALI COE. All cues were well executed giving the right ambience throughout.

Sound Team NICK TAYLOR and LINDA THOMAS had a tough job in such a short amount of technical time to get the balance and cues just right.

Wardrobe Team, ANTHEA PROSSER, SHIRLEY WRAY-BROWN, JOY CRAWFORD, PAM BAILEY and HEATHER MALONE excelled themselves with so many bright and colourful costumes to produce. Everyone onstage was well made up too, with a Make-up team made up of ELIZABETH HAMPTON, and helpers SHIRLEY WOOTTEN, SHEILA RAWLES and ABBY DEARING and hair styles by ANGELA EVANS.

Properties Team ERIC MARTIN, ANNE FIELDING ably supported by ANN HERTLER SMITH, BONNIE and MIKE JOYCE, GORDON SUMMERFIELD and STEVE STROUD.

With such a big cast, and you all know who you are, I shall not list you all by name!

The whole cast and chorus on stage all gave great energy throughout from start to finish. Everyone danced with confidence and was very well disciplined. With all the principal roles double cast and as a member of the audience, I did find it difficult to identify some of the principals in the second half after the break. Perhaps in hindsight it may have been better to dress them in the same costume. With that said, all principals sang and acted with great diction and volume.

As Ann's farewell performance as Artistic Director for StageWorks I do hope it is not too long before you can all be continuing to perform and entertaining your local audiences again.

Your programme was beautifully presented and very informative.

Thank you Malcolm once again for your very kind welcome and hospitality.