

BROS Theatre Company

CHICAGO • OCTOBER 1996 • EDMUND KEAN THEATRE

REVIEW • NODA

We were privileged to be invited to review Barnes and Richmond Operatic Society's Chicago, it was a Chicago of exceptionally high standard. Your Front of House people, sensibly delayed the commencement of the performance until all late comers were seated and catered for. Your reception was excellent, which paved the way for a very enjoyable evening.

Vitality was the hallmark of this show, every character contributed to the fabulous end product.

Velma Kelly set the scene for this story - a very strong positive character, she portrayed marvelous co-ordination-facial expressions and positive movements which came across the footlights exceedingly well. The standard she set was emulated by the rest of the cast for the duration of the show.

Another super strong portrayal by Sue Currie as Roxie Hart was in complete contrast to that of Velma Kelly, but was of equally high standard, her sharp repose to everyone who played opposite her in their various scenes was outstanding.

The Amos Hart of Carl Smith was magnificent, by far the best characterisation of the part we have ever seen. The adjectives are exhausted to convey out thoughts of this high quality performance. Superb singing, tremendous diction and a nice easy style to encompass his work.

Billy Flynn as played by Bryan Cardus once again very high praise for a portrayal well executed. A believable character, very sharp and pointed as an American Lawyer who knew his business, he left no stone unturned in bringing out every aspect of Billy Flynn, most enjoyable singing of quality and clever manipulation of the various characters around him.

The stamp of authority oozed from Mama Morton her body language, voice and general presence on the girls in the cell block came over with intensity, another fine strong performance from Lynne Tompkins.

Inspired casting are the words to use in relation to Mary Sunshine, brilliant, wonderfully sung. He was so very good, that when his dress was ripped from his body, there was a gasp from the audience, who were taken by surprise when his true self was revealed, which really qualifies the standard of acting and singing by 'Fabia Hamilton' (Hamilton Faber).

Andy Yeates as the MC, performed his task with skill and ability with a nice flourishing touch. Andy, then as Fred Casely, gave a contrast of character which once again was in keeping with the very high standard achieved.

The five cell block girls gave us a complete contrast of character and each girl made the most of each part, there were no weak links. Each conveyed the sizzle through the audience, lots of sharp dialogue between them and no missed cues.

Roxie's Boys, particularly well done, especially the production number with Roxie, maintaining the high standard of the show.

Nobody faltered in their parts as reporters, sitting in the front, so close to the action that we were able to observe the whole group and then their response to the main players, with their singing and dialogue, being first rate.

There was an excellent jury in the form of Jim Trimmer, nice mood changes with every Jury person.

Bernie Messenger as the District Attorney had a good forceful personality, the right stance and gestures, again a supporting role, which was well performed.

All the supporting roles in this production were well cast. They all worked for each other and did not let each other down.

Your choreographer and the whole production team did you proud, you obviously listed and rehearsed and so your musical numbers were very professionally executed.

Your Musical Director controlled the band superbly, it was a pleasure to listen to the music, so faithfully interpreted, the quality of musicianship, left nothing to be desired.

Props, scenery, lighting and sound 101%. Costumes cannot be faulted in any way, they were worn with aplomb and were correct in detail.

Your programme is very informative, congratulations to your compilers of same.

Overall this once again is a first class highly professional production from BROS and your director deserves the highest accolade.

John Applin
Report for the NODA London Area
