

BROS Theatre Company

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF • APRIL 1999 • RICHMOND THEATRE

REVIEW • RICHMOND & TWICKENHAM CHRONICLE

RAISING THE ROOF

When BROS Theatre Company chose Fiddler On The Roof for it's annual production at Richmond Theatre It could hardly have envisaged the present day parallels to this tragic tale.

So, with the horrors of the Balkans fresh In my mind, I wondered what director Robert Salter might make of the story.

In the event he took a broad-brush approach, moving swiftly from each vignette to the next so that there was a coherence to the telling.

What I did miss were the many moments that can make one catch one's breath or bring a sudden lump to the throat.

None of this could be laid at the door of the performers who threw themselves Into their myriad tasks with enthusiasm and a great deal of skill.

Heading the cast was Steve Taylor, whose Tevye was the most accomplished I have seen with his rounded portrayal of a good man with all his human faults as well as virtues - and I have never seen a more natural portrayal of the Milkman's conversations with God.

Clare Henderson Roe matched him perfectly as his wife Golde with her lovely singing voice able to hold the house rapt with the tiniest phrase.

Sue Currie war eldest daughter Tzeltel, capturing the agony of choice between following her heart or causing her father pain.

As her gentle tailor husband Motel, Gavin Morgan was funny but did not quite achieve that sense of magic as he wins his bride.

The real heartbreak for Tevye comes, of course, with the marriage of one of his daughters outside the Jewish faith, eclipsing even that of the desertion of another to go join a revolutionary young student in his exile in Siberia.

These scenes were carried off with sensitivity as well as emotional power and I liked the way that the Fiddler (a sinuous, non-speaking performance by Alison Titchmarsh) was present at all these climactic moments as a watching presence.

Mike Carver's musical direction was vivid although there was some scrappy orchestral playing and Viki Osman reproduced the prescribed choreography With great skill.

The whole production was very much greater than the sum of It's parts and It was not just the modern resonances which made this a genuinely moving evening.

George Allan
Richmond & Twickenham Chronicle
