

BMYP: The Addams Family Musical Young@part

As seen by Debi Weaver (NODA SW District 13 Representative) and Matthew Heaton (NODA SW Regional Councillor) at Downs School on Friday 27th March 2025

Director/ Choreographer: Vicki Klein

Director of Acting: Chris Parslow

Musical Director: Tom Jones

The Addams Family Musical is a highly entertaining musical that brings the beloved creepy and kooky clan vividly to life. Packed with some great songs, sharp humour, and wonderfully eccentric characters, the musical captures the spirit of Charles Addams' original cartoons as well as the classic TV series. The Young@Part version is adapted for younger performers, is shorter and some more mature content removed. It centres around Wednesday Addams, who has fallen in love with a "normal" boy Lucas Beineke. The families come together for a dinner that reveals secrets and tests relationships.

As we drove up the sweeping drive to the venue and entered the wooden panelled Grand Hall it was clear it was a suitably imposing setting for this spooky musical. This was a new space for the group, and although a great looking venue. The performance space was very compact, and the seating for the audience even more so, and very uncomfortable, even for a short production. I was informed that it had been very difficult to find a suitable performing space in Bristol. However, that aside the group decorated the space brilliantly, with lots of spooky touches, such as the joke names on the headstones.

On entering the theatre, the static set looked great, with a star cloth across the back and raised platform the width of the stage to provide some height. The hidden dinner table under the staging was genius. The Gates to the Addams mansion were central, with lots of spooky stage decorations and it was great how these were used at the sides of the performance area with drapes for the house and then with greenery for the garden. The setting of the scenes by the cast was excellent and maintained the pace of the production.

Director and Choreographer Vicki Klein, had a limited amount of space to work with but managed so well, using all the available entrances and exits to great effect. I feel the raised staging could have been used a bit more to make the most of the space available as much of the ensemble movement was often hidden behind others. The pace was slick throughout. Choreography was limited due the space, but was suitable to the various styles in the music and worked well throughout

The lighting was atmospheric, with levels and colours suitable for the production and combined well with the use of haze. Coverage was very good. I believe the lighting had to

be manually operated, which is very difficult and you coped extremely well it, with a minimum of issues.

Sound wise I did feel that the children needed to be mic'd up. From interval discussions it sounds as though this was not possible in this venue, which was a shame as we lost a fair bit of the dialogue and singing. I also feel that there is a difference between projecting and shouting, and some characters were perhaps pushing a little and shouting their dialogue somewhat.

The costumes and make up were absolutely fantastic as I have come to expect from this group, every single ancestor had their own character/era, and it looked great. The family itself had the iconic visuals we expect. I did wonder if the Family should have also been a bit paler - I know this was to contrast to the Ancestors as the dead. Morticia in particular was very tanned!!

In reviewing the Principal characters:

Gomez (Elliott Wicks) A fabulous performance, strong characterisation, with a really consistent accent and strong vocals and movement. Lovely comic timing too. Well done.

Morticia (Bea Kohn) A lovely, stylised performance, I really liked that you were consistent with the characters gestures and style, which you maintained throughout. Excellent.

Wednesday (Ellena Horne) I feel this is a very difficult character to portray as you need to get the balance between the character we know as a "dead pan angry teenager" but still be believable that you are in love with Lucas. Personally, I would have like to have seen some of the softer side of her too. Outside of this, singing and movement were good.

Pugsley (Seb Nichols) an endearing performance, with lots of energy. You got the laughs from the audience in your song. Well done.

Uncle Fester (Bob Steggle) I hear you stepped into this role last minute. Great job. I also saw you do it a few years ago with another group, so out of interest I looked back to see what I wrote... "Uncle Fester was a joy, with his eccentric antics and quirks" I felt the same way, so enthusiastically performed, you had lots of lovely touches to the character and great physicality, which worked well.

Granny (Aysel Shalaby) A great character performance, I enjoyed your scene with Pugsley, which had the audience giggling.

Lurch (Lawson Grant) A difficult role which you manged so well – mastering the mannerisms well. Your grunting conversation with the Beinekes was great.

Alice (Evie Coghlan Forbes) Another strong and confident performance, with good comedic and dialogue timing. The Full Disclosure Scene a highlight for me.

Mal (Josh Turner) I understand this was a last minute step in as well. I really wouldn't have known if I hadn't been told. I really enjoyed when you let loose and started dancing as you found your "old self"

Lucas (Paddy Parmiter) well done, the most "normal" character in this show. You and Wednesday worked well together, creating a believable relationship. You sang and moved well

Ancestors (Ensemble). You all performed with enthusiasm and appropriate energy, and I liked the little quirks you had for your individual characters. Well done all of you – your work here was a real highlight of the production.

Another great BMYP performance Well Done to you all both on and off stage in working with a challenging venue, which you made the very best of. Thank you so much for the invitation.

PLEASE NOTE:

These comments solely reflect the view of the Representative and can only relate to the performance seen.

Any observation made by the reviewer can only be based on what they see at the performance in question. The reviewer may have received information in advance of the performance, and it is inevitable that his assessment will be effected by that knowledge.

The N.O.D.A. Representative's intention is to give an objective critique of the overall production and in particular the performance viewed. It should be remembered that any review of this nature can only be objective as far as the techniques used during the performance observed. Any criticisms expressed may not have been valid at other performances, and are only made to encourage higher standards in Amateur Theatre.

It is hoped that the audience's appreciation of your efforts will have given everyone a lift and encouraged you to greater achievements in the future and that the observations made by the reviewer will prove helpful in improving future productions.