

BMYP – EVITA – REDGRAVE THEATRE – 26 APRIL 2013

Director – Vicki Klein Musical Director – Kerrie Duce
Choreographers – Vicki Klein and Tina Kelly

Once again Vicki Klein has managed to present a first class production. This Lloyd Webber Musical/Opera is not the easiest to stage and to have a young cast having to deal with the raw emotion required to portray these adult characters, they must have been exhausted both physically and mentally, especially the main characters. But as always they had worked hard and we had an excellent production.

SET

The excellent one piece set was simple but very effective, allowing it to be moved by the cast to represent different scenes combined with the lighting effects and simple props. Congratulations to set designer Allison Faulkner and her team.

MUSIC

The Band under the baton of Kerrie Duce were a little overpowering at times but settled down in the second half. Kerrie had obviously worked hard with the principals and chorus to cope with what is not an easy score to sing and she should be very proud of them as they repaid all her efforts one hundred and ten per cent. Congratulations.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Usually with a show presented by BMYP there is large scale choreography, this being a trade mark of Vicki and Tina. In this show however there is no real opportunity for these grand stage numbers, despite the lack of this the choreography was as usual excellently handled, with so much movement the cast seemed to move like clockwork each character programmed to move with the least effort, so that all this looked natural. There is one criticism however; in the tango the gentlemen were not holding their hands as they should have rested lightly on the shoulder of their partner.

LIGHTING

Congratulations to James Harrington on his excellent lighting design, it was most effective allowing the many different scenes to be portrayed, there were no dark patches and at all times the cast were well lit.

SOUND

This was as always well handled and we could hear every word clearly.

COSTUME

Jane Black obviously had her work cut out for her, it must have been a nightmare trying to find so many costumes that were in period, and also having so many changes of costume. But her hard work paid off, everyone was perfectly dressed, the costumes seemed to be part of each actor. This was a colourful production from the lowly

peasants to the aristocrats and the army, everyone looked right and in period. Congratulations.

MAKE-UP AND WIGS

The make-up looked natural and in period, the wigs for the most part did not look obvious, however Eva's blonde wig did tend to get a little untidy and I was worried when Peron held her head and moved it to his lap

PROPS

Sheri Kohn, Sheila Eastwood and Annette Richer are to be congratulated for providing all the props none of which looked out of place.

THE CAST

There were four outstanding performances in this show, each one of these actors seem to get better and better with each production – Jess Carter – Aaron Holmes – Euan Shanahan and Jess Bell.

EVA PERON (Jess Carter)

Jess must have been exhausted emotionally after playing this part, this was an outstanding performance from a talented actress who seems to grow with each production. Jess has an amazing voice for her age with a large range and she sang each song with apparent ease and put so much emotion into them. It is always difficult to play a real person, and Jess had obviously done her homework to create such a believable character. Congratulations

JUAN PERON (Aaron Holmes)

Aaron made a believable Peron, with his offhand attitude to women, and his climb to fame as President, this was a well thought out portrayal, and only at the death of Eva did we see the real emotion that he had hidden all those years, Aaron has a powerful voice and was at home on the stage with good positive movement and interaction with the rest of the company. A convincing and impressive performance at no time did he go out of character. Congratulations

CHE (Euan Shanahan)

This was another outstanding performance, Euan just seems to be part of the stage, and his movements were positive and natural. Euan is as I have said before a multi talented actor, his singing was excellent, and when acting as the narrator he held each scene together and interacted well with the other actors. Congratulations

MISTRESS (Jess Bell)

Jess only had a minor role as Peron's mistress, but she made sure that she made a lasting impression. Her interpretation of "Another suitcase " was professionally done, putting so much emotion into the song that we as the audience felt for her. But like the character she was portraying there is always another lover around the corner. Congratulations on a superb performance.

MAGALDI (Tom Ryall)

Tom has a pleasant singing voice, but did have a problem with his upper range at the end of his songs. This was a convincing portrayal of Eva's first love and the gigolo that he was .he moved well on stage and looked relaxed.

THE COMPANY

The rest of the cast had the job of being Eva's parents, brothers and sisters, Lovers, Generals, Barmen Dockers, Peron's thugs, Nurses, Tango Dancers and Aristocrats. There are too many to mention by name but they all worked hard to create each individual and they all looked the part they were portraying, Good strong voices singing the difficult score with ease and moving naturally on stage whether they were dancing or just being a crowd. There are within the cast so many talented actors and they gave one hundred and ten per cent of themselves. Vicki can be proud of them because there were no weak links, they all reacted well, and interacted with each other and the main characters. They must have all been exhausted and drained emotionally at the end of the run, Put children on stage and you have the "aaah" factor which was put across with the nurses in their song "Santa Evita" this was a moment which brought tears to the eyes of some of the audience. Vicki had obviously made her cast work hard and they had in turn presented an outstanding show. Congratulations

Thank you for inviting me, and as always for the warm welcome front of house. Despite the sad nature of the show I thoroughly enjoyed what was once again a professionally staged production. I look forward to being invited to your next show.

Tony Winstone
NODA Representative – District 13