

BRISTOL MUSICAL YOUTH PRODUCTIONS – HALF A SIXPENCE OLYMPUS THEATRE – 29 MARCH 2019

Director and Choreographer – Vicki Klein Musical Director – Kerrie Duce-Jones

What impresses me most about this group is the dedication and commitment that they put into any production, working as a well-oiled team, there is always so much energy and enthusiasm, and at all times they stay in character even when just being on stage. This show suits the group because it is all singing and dancing, it was well cast. There are plenty of songs that you come out singing, it is a family friendly show, and despite the singing and dancing still tells the story of Kipps. The show based on a book by H.G.Wells tells the story, with a moral, of an orphan who inherits a fortune, climbs the social ladder, then loses it all and realises that you can't buy happiness. It also became a film as well as the musical and starred in all cases Tommy Steele as Kipps

SET

The set designed by Vicki Klein and Dave Thompson was well thought out, allowing for the many changes that were required with the cast moving set pieces on and off smoothly and quickly. The effects of the changing lights in the backing added to the show, although minimalist it still managed to give the impressions for each scene.

MUSIC

Kerrie Duce-Jones is to be congratulated for keeping a tight rein on her orchestra making sure that they played at the right level never over powering the singers. It was obvious that the cast had been worked hard with soloists and the chorus with their excellent harmonies.

SOUND

Congratulations to James Hartland for making sure that we could hear the voices onstage, the sound was perfect never sounding unreal or tinny which can happen so easily with radio mikes,

LIGHTING

The lighting in the capable hands of James Harrington ensured that the cast were always well lit with no shadows or dark patches.

CHOREOGRAPHY

I am always amazed how Vicki manages to impress with her choreography, and the many routines which as ever were different and inventive were handled with ease by the cast who always kept together and danced with smiles on their faces.

COSTUMES/HATS/MASKS

These were excellent, colourful and in period, congratulations to Anne Holgate, Sheila Eastwood and Jenny Langham for the costumes and to Bernadette Tucker and Sheri Kohn for the hats and masks, and it must have been hard work making all the costumes and ensuring that the cast looked at home and handling the many changes.

THE CAST

ARTHUR KIPPS (Isaac Lewis)

This was an outstanding performance, Isaac made the character his own and kept the accent up throughout the show. You attacked the role with enthusiasm and energy excellent singing and exceptional dancing, a smile on your face at all times. Good stage presence, you interacted well with the other members of the cast and especially Ann, you could see the young love blossoming, but your head was turned by the beauty of Helen and her status, but as always true love wins the day, you brought out all the many facets of the character. Congratulations on a professional style performance.

ANN (Cara Jervis)

An excellent performance you really encapsulated the many facets of the character, a clear singing and speaking voices you were the other half of the sixpence to Kipps. Good interaction with Kipps and the rest of the cast, you kept the accent up as well. Good movement and you looked at ease and at home on the stage. You lit up the stage on every appearance, congratulations on a first-class performance.

YOUNG KIPPS (Des Coghlan-Forbes) – YOUNG ANN (Evie Coghlan-Forbes)

You both showed great awareness of the roles and gave a confident performance. Good clear voices and movement you worked well together, you both looked at ease and at home on the stage, Well done.

MR SHALFORD (Guy Rudin)

You took this role seriously and were the epitome of a Victorian boss. Good voice and you interacted well with Kipps and your staff, we saw the many sides of the character. Well done.

SID (Theo Birakos) – Buggins (Max Brewer) – PEARCE (Ben Kenna) – JACK (Eden Jones)

The four of you worked as a team, there was good interaction with both Kipps and the shop girls. You brought out the many sides of the characters, Sid being the socialist, Pearce the typical dandy and Buggins ever the pessimist and Jack a typical shop boy. I noted that you had added another character that of Jack, I can see the reasoning behind this, four boys and four girls You created all these roles perfectly, Good strong voices, well done on keeping the accents all the way through the show, and good dancing, well done on a convincing performance.

VICTORIA (Scarlett Last) – FLO (Amelia Battersby) – KATE (Mya Russell) – EMILY (Emily Chaffe)

You worked well together as a team always staying in character, clear singing and speaking voices, and again keeping the accents throughout, full of energy and you gave a confident performance, and you moved well in the many routines always together. Interacting well with the shop boys and Kipps, these were well thought performances. Well done, it was obvious that you were all enjoying yourselves.

MRS WALSINGHAM (Kate Sergeant)

What impressed me about your interpretation of the role was that you were Mrs Walsingham, from your demeanour, manner and stance, and this was complimented with the upper-class voice, you took command of the stage at every entrance, from head to toe you were this character. Well done on a convincing performance.

HELEN WALSINGHAM (Isla Moody)

Excellent voice and you had obviously thought about the many sides of the character, you have a nice clear singing and speaking voice, you lit up the stage and at all times stayed in character. Well done on a convincing and confident performance.

YOUNG WALSINGHAM (Simeon Wynne)

How Kipps didn't see that you were the villain of the piece, but then he was naive. This was a well thought out interpretation of the character, good voice you exuded oiliness and ingratiating manner that the character was, well done.

HARRY CHITTERLOW (John Gompels)

This was a gem of a role and you went OTT which suited the character, there was the theatrical accent, and flair and with the excellent comedy timing. Good movement and stage presence. This was the typical theatrical impresario and actor of the period. you came over as the well-meaning father figure who was a true friend to Kipps, this was a well thought out performance, you became Harry Chitterlow, congratulations.

LAURA/GWENDOLIN (Rita Shterenlikht) – JEREMIAH CARTER (Aineias Arango)**MR MACHIN/REPORTER (Joel Jervis) – TOASTMASTER (Elliot Whitmore)**

Although smaller roles they are all essential to the storyline, you all stayed in character and even when having nothing to say, you remained part of the action Well done.

CHORUS/OTHER PARTS

The one thing that this group has is the fact that if just being on stage you stay in character and become part of the action. Working as a team you all sing and dance so well, smiles on your faces and always together. Well done.

Congratulations to Vicki Klein and her talented cast, who at all times kept the energy and enthusiasm, Also to the exceptional backstage team that are the backbone of the company who work tirelessly in the background, to bring the show to life.

Thank you for your kind invitation and warm and helpful welcome front of house as always. It always a pleasure to come to a BMYP show as you are always in for a treat and a professional looking show.

Tony Winstone
NODA Representative – District 13