



Society : Slough Musical Theatre Company
Production: *Jekyll & Hyde*
Date : 28th February, 2007
Venue : The Desborough Suite, Maidenhead
Report by : Barrie Theobald, Asst. Regional
Representative, Area 13

Report

In the absence of a Regional Representative for Area 14 I was delighted to accept your kind invitation to review *Jekyll and Hyde* – a show I had not seen before. Unfortunately, on the night I came, serious problems were experienced with the new digital sound system which meant that much of the reproduced sound was inaudible. I do hope you managed to get things right later in the week, as it was a truly dramatic show.

RYAN STEVENS (*Jekyll/Hyde*) sailed through this demanding role in style. I recall watching a play version of this show in which the transformation was achieved by the character falling behind his desk, where he changed wigs. Ryan cleverly achieved the change before our eyes by distorting his body and shaking out the long hair of his wig (helped, of course, by the lighting). I have watched Ryan perform on many occasions in a variety of differing roles, but consider this to be one of his finest interpretations.

ANDREA TUSHINGHAM (*Lucy Harris*) is another young lady who devotes much of her time to amateur dramatics and regularly appears in productions throughout the area. Her characterisation of this role was well-developed and her solo numbers were forcefully delivered.

MICHAEL EDMONDS (*John Utterson*) suffered from the faulty sound system, especially in Act 1 when the plot was being developed. This was a shame, as his characterisation and stage presence suited the role well.

JENNIFER COLEMAN (*Emma Carew*) gave an assured and competent performance as *Jekyll's* unfortunate fiancé with good verbal and vocal projection. I hope she achieves her dream of studying for a degree in musical theatre, leading to professional employment in the art.

TERRY HAWKINS (*Sir Danvers Carew*) can always be relied on to give a performance wholly in character, unfortunately disadvantaged the night I came by the dodgy sound system.

GRAHAM HAWKINS (*Simon Stride*) took full advantage of the opportunities afforded to be 'unpleasant' offered by this role thoroughly enjoying himself in the process!

NATHANAEL PAGE (*The Bishop of Basingstoke*) was yet another performer who suffered through the sound failure, not only in volume but also with the physical equipment - at one stage it appeared that his radio microphone was flapping on the side of his head! However, he manfully carried on, giving us a good interpretation of this rather duplicitous character.

JEAN JOHNSON (*Lady Beaconsfield*) is another performer who regularly pops up in a wide variety of cameo roles. I guess being only a 'Lady' this time did not quite rank with her recent role as a 'Duchess', but never-the-less her Lady B was delivered with just the right touch of upper crust haughtiness.

The show afforded several opportunities for members of the chorus to competently portray minor cameo roles, and, indeed, on the night I came Jeni Money fell sick and her role was played at very short notice by Joanne Godsmark.

SIMON WOODBRIDGE's skilled flair as director and choreographer were very much in evidence throughout the show. I was particularly impressed with the clever groupings achieved in the ensemble numbers, marred on one or two occasions when those holding the screens did not quite find themselves in the correct position to be fully lit by **ED FAGAN**'s competent lighting design. I've probably harped on too much about the sound quality the night I came. It certainly affected much of the singing, which was frequently overpowered by the orchestra. That was a great shame as musical director **ROGER WITNEY** had obviously worked his cast very hard to overcome the challenges presented by this demanding show.

Costumes supervised by **ISABELLE & CAROLINE FOLEY** were excellent and were all well in keeping with the period. I obviously missed something makeup-wise, as the relevance of the white faces on some of the chorus members went completely over my head. (Dim reviewer!!).

The minimal props plot enabled stage manager **ALICIA WRIGHT** and her crew to maintain the momentum of the show – the 'open frame' scenery items proving most effective.

The interesting and informative programme compiled by **BOB SIMPSON** included many rehearsal 'shots' in addition to the head-and-shoulders 'mug shots' of all the cast.

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend your production and for the welcome and hospitality given to us by your front of house manager **CAROL NICHOLAS**. I do hope the sound problem was sorted out quickly, enabling audiences later in the week to fully enjoy the high class production you gave.

Barrie Theobald
Assistant Regional Representative, Area 13