

## NODA REVIEW

### SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL

Performed by Young NOMADS

Directed by Andy McGowan & Tim McCormick

Musical; Director Simon Pearce

Choreographer Jessica Clifford

Having never seen Seussical before and being a comparative novice of the weird and wonderful Dr Seuss stories, I wondered whether I would be able to follow this musical by a very talented company, but I need not have.

The story takes the well-known characters from the original Dr. Seuss stories and intertwines them with a very interesting story told in part narration by the "Cat in the Hat". The stories concern the Whos, and in particular JoJo, whose misadventures leave them living on a speck of dust where they can only be heard by Horton the elephant, for which Horton is ridiculed by the other animals, with the exception of Gertrude, a bird who is trying to gain Horton's affection.

This musical is a very popular one with youth companies and this 28-song version suited Young NOMADS well. It really took off from the start with confidence and energy. There were good performances - acting, dancing and singing - throughout the 50-strong cast. I cannot mention everyone so I must content myself with mentioning a few.

The Cat in the Hat was played by ALEX MATTHEWS who gave a fine performance; he exercised a natural feel for the stage. OLIVIA STEVENS was outstanding as Horton the elephant bringing every emotion possible to the role. Olivia has a splendid voice and I have no doubt we will be seeing much more of her. Another obviously up and coming young actor is LAUREL BEACH who was singularly impressive as JoJo.

I was particularly impressed by the "big voices" - RHAPSODY ROLFE as the Sour Kangaroo, LOWRI DAVIES bringing the self-centred Mayzie to life and a very stylish performance from SOPHIE OWEN as the pining but ultimately heroic Gertrude McFuzz.

Of course every cast member made a important contribution like ZAK HALL and ABBI GOODE both producing confident performances as Mr and Mrs Mayor. In fact I loved all The Whos their singing and synchronised movements were great. There was a lively contribution from the mischievous Wickershams and an excellent scene with General Schmitz played with great authority by LUKE BURROWS.

Musically this show is a huge challenge as it is mainly sung. It was very obvious that Musical Director SIMON PEARCE and Choreographer JESSICA CLIFFORD had worked the cast hard which certainly paid off for all concerned.

The costumes were excellent, devised and created by SARAH SMITH and well done to her team of helpers for meeting the challenge of the numerous costume changes. Sound had the perennial problem with radio mics and Lighting suffered across the front of the stage as, unusually, there was no follow-spot. The colourful set was absolutely splendid offering various levels which were well used. Stage Management too can never be overlooked; often taken for granted but never to be taken lightly. An all round splendid job technically.

This cast was taken from the junior and middle sections of Young NOMADS and had an average age of eleven and a half years. Reading the Youth Section Director's note in the

## NODA REVIEW

programme opened my eyes to the contribution the volunteers from the senior membership make to support these young actors, so we must not forget those who give their support particularly those who do the rehearsal snacks especially when such a young cast are involved and who are no doubt always hungry.

Congratulations ANDY McGOWAN on a fine directorial debut which provided a very slick execution of a first-class youth theatre production that kept the audience entertained throughout.

Well done to all involved (I saw Team A) all your hard work paid off and I look forward to seeing many of the same cast in the NOMADS Summer School production of *Dream Nights* in August.

Julie Petrucci  
Regional Representative NODA East, District Four South