

ALL SHOOK UP

NODA Review

This very lively and energetic musical, set in a boring small town in America in 1950s, features 25 numbers from the Elvis Presley song book. All the songs fitted with the dialogue and were an essential part of the storyline which was comical in places. The plot itself was quite complicated with a number of individual storylines and relationships running throughout. However, everyone seemed to be looking for love !

The show opened revealing the flexible set comprising a gantry with platform which enabled several entrances and exits and was able to accommodate the large cast, all of whom were under 21 years. Chad, played by Jenson Bacon was the good looking lead as "Elvis" and excelled in this part complete with guitar and pelvic movements to the well known music. His voice was convincing in the many musical numbers in which he was involved, including his solos and duets. I admired his blue suede shoes !

Rhianna Gregory played the tomboy mechanic, Natalie in an assertive and very assured way. Smitten by Chad she sang "One Night With You" which showcased her confident and attractive voice. As "Ed" she maintained not just her American accent but also a gruff "male" voice. Well done !

Ben Rolph, playing Jim, impressed in this role as Natalie's widowed father looking for love again and he also had a great voice. Maddie Austin, as cafe owner Sylvia, who was a down to earth character, played a lovely role and displayed a confident voice in her solo of "There's Always Me".

I loved the role of Dennis, very ably played by William Hackett as a gauche, awkward and rather "nerdy" character who was hopelessly in love with Natalie. Liv Possee was an attractive and somewhat reserved museum curator, Miss Sandra who was aghast at the "goings on" in the town.

I enjoyed Hattie Phillips' acting as the rather domineering Mayor Matilda Hyde responsible for enforcing prohibitive laws on acceptable behaviour in the town. However, she did finally show a more tender side to her character. Kieran Wingrove was her son, Dean, very much dominated by his mother but becoming confident in declaring his love for Lorraine delightfully played by Poppy Taylor. Luke Roberts was the somewhat hapless and timid Sheriff Earl.

Without exception all the individual performances were first class and the solos, duets and group songs sounded fantastic. A large ensemble was kept busy with many group numbers, all well rehearsed and lively. There were many varied, energetic (frantic !) and infectious dance routines throughout thanks to the skills of Director and Choreographer Robyn Gowers. Perfect timings and coordination.

There were several set changes achieved by bringing props onto the stage. The jukebox and

the petrol pumps looked very realistic ! Set changes were slick and a drop down curtain enabled front of tabs activity whilst props were being moved.

Sound and lighting were appropriate with some great effects e.g. the use of red lights, the cross on the church, all of which added to the overall effects of the set and action. Costumes were all of the rock "n" roll period with some charming dresses for the females.

The band was superb hitting just the right sound levels throughout with the exceptional achievements down to the talents of Musical Director, Susannah Edom.

Finally, many congratulations to everyone involved in any way and most of all to Director Robyn Gowers for her imagination and innovation in showcasing the many talents in this successful society to create this scintillating production.

The audience really enjoyed this show and so did I.