

THE BOYFRIEND

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The major problem for a teenage company is that it has to keep inventing itself. No sooner do budding stars appear than they move on, leaving a fresh layer to emerge. For WOW this was an especially difficult year. Virtually all of the main leads from last year were no longer available.

But they need have no worry. The company is in in good hands. The younger than usual cast tackled the older than usual musical with the aplomb that is now expected of this society. In particular, Rachel Goddard and Mark Ellis stepped up from their earlier supporting roles to grab centre stage.

Goddard neatly captures the innocence and naivety of Polly, while Ellis has commanding presence and a strong singing voice as the Boyfriend of the title.

He bears little resemblance to the diminutive figure who was almost buried under an Elvis wig three years ago.

There are strong performances too from the secondary couple, Charlotte Watling and James Simpson. Watling exudes Gallic charm as the prim yet flirtatious headmistress, romances by Simpson's sturdy yet needy Percival Browne.

Rosie Goddard and Isabella Tull also get a chance to step in to the spotlight, and look perfectly at home when they do so.

There were a variety of accents on show. Simpson, together with Michael Watling and Libby Johnson as Lord and Lady Brockhurst, give us cut glass Queen's English, alongside Ed Tunningley's American, and an assortment of French characters, including Sarah Williams' captivating Hortense.

There were some strong singing performances, and it was good to see the males more than matching the exuberance of their partners when it came to the dancing.

The show was shorter than usual and the sound system occasionally let the actors down, but this was another success for the society, and one that bodes well for the immediate future.