

HALF A SIXPENCE

NODA Review

WITHAM OPERATIC WORKSHOP (WOW!)

HALF A SIXPENCE

Directed by Faith Rogers/Louse Lachance

Musical Director Ben Firth

Performed at Witham Public Hall 20th Feb 2016

A popular choice of show and a very receptive audience with this lively colourful production of "Half a Sixpence". A huge cast ranging from 11 to 19 year olds all totally giving their best with lots of energy.

Two very important characters in Kipps and Ann played by Jake Collis and Charlotte Tofts, who were well matched, Jake did exceptionally well with his character, and had a confident and very cheeky manner with his rise in circumstances from a shop worker to a wealthy man after inheriting a fortune. Charlotte as his childhood sweetheart, later to become his wife looked very good in her role, and had a clear singing voice. The situations she faced along the way were quite emotional and in the main these were well played.

All three apprentices Pearce, Sid and Buggins were super and gave such different characters which made them individuals. Charlie Smith as Pearce, Max Lenoir as Sid and Harry Tunningley as Buggins really made the most of their friendship with Kipps, all with confidence and style. I liked their opening quartet of "All in the Cause of Economy" and the harmonies came through well balanced.

The shop girls of Flo, Victoria and Kate were perky and a good match for the antics of the boys, and were lively bright young things of the period.

Dexter Montgomery as Chitterlow gave a believable actor with grand gestures and a commitment to his character. This is a super part to play and Dexter obviously really enjoyed playing Chitterlow.

Tasha Gooderham as Helen Walsingham, Amy Seymour as Mrs Walsingham and Tom Nicholl as Young Walsingham were a confident trio. All looked well in some lovely period costumes. Mrs Walsingham putting Kipps in his place was very well timed, and for a supposed Lady when losing her temper with him was perhaps rather loud?

Mr Shalford suitably the rather pompous owner of Shalford's Drapery Emporium with Chris Tierney also did well in this role.

Many other roles were played within the production and it was hard to believe the ages of the cast and the confidence they all displayed.

All the musical numbers were very well sung lead by Musical Director Ben Firth and a good orchestra. Occasionally the sound from the pit was a little loud against some of the soloists, but mostly the balance was very good.

The sound system was quite loud generally but acceptable. Superb sets and costumes all looking very professional were an asset to the production.

This company does encourage young people by having various workshops and a summer school for them, and also choosing shows which appeal and get them involved. It is so good to see young people going from chorus to main parts after getting some experience with the group.

The musical numbers which really got the cast going were “Money to Burn” and “Flash, Bang Wallop” which were great fun and sung with vigour.

We enjoyed the show and great credit to Faith and Louise for their direction and to all the cast and everyone in so many ways associated with the production.