

LES MISERABLES - 2009

Ron Fosker's Review

It only goes to show what little people can do, says one of the characters in this school edition of the West End classic.

Indeed it does.

Figuratively speaking WOW are the little people of Witham Amateur Operatic Society and rarely can their seniors have put on such a vibrant, pulsating, high-class show as this.

Colourful ensemble numbers melded with outstanding individual performances as the cast, all under 19, threw their all into the evening. The choreography, scenery, sound effects were all spot on and musical director Jill Parkin can be immensely proud of what she has produced.

Strong voices and confident acting skills abound. Faith Rogers, Sam Carlyle and 13-year-old Zoe Rogers all handle their poignant and central roles with strength and poise.

Thomas Clarke's deep resonant voice contrasts with Elliott Elder's cheeky chappie routine as the little person in the quote above while Jake Davis, 14, a cheeky chappie himself only a couple of years ago, has matured into a powerful male lead.

The wonderfully inventive Sam Marks and Amy Trigg almost stole the show as the coarse and conniving innkeepers but the actor around whom the whole thing revolved was the outstanding Thomas Holland.

He ranged from an angry young prisoner to a dying old man and his superbly controlled voice ranged almost as far. His coup de grace was in the opening scene in which he displayed a hitherto unseen edge with a voice that was more Kings of Leon than The King And I.

But Thomas was the tip of a brilliant iceberg. The star was the cascading ensemble of talent ho put on one of the best evenings local musical theatre, adult or otherwise, has produced for many years.