

Noda Report

Show	Boarding Now
Date	16 th November 2011
Venue	Vera Fletcher Hall
Director	Gloria Smith
Choreographer	Claire Bender and Helen Whittle
Musical Director	Elizabeth Cooper
Reviewer	Helen Mills

A production like this even though it has been resuscitated after four years is a vehicle that enables a company to show off its talents both individually and with members of the chorus. This chorus performed their numbers with gusto the director and the choreographers had obviously worked hard to achieve a high standard. It was good to see characters emerging in the various scenes and it was also pleasing to see performers in groups and not all in straight lines. The semi-circle in 'Hebrew Slaves' however was very effective. Of the company numbers I particularly liked 'Champagne' a good opener, 'People Sing', 'Open in Venice', 'Tradition', 'Bangles and Beads' and the finale. Though it was not flagged up in the programme I understand that Gloria was responsible for much of the choreography. Liz Cooper had worked you all hard to achieve a good sound. The only problem was the lack of male voices and therefore the balance in the harmonies. Where are the men? It is, however, often the same now with all societies and those who were there did their valiant best!

Norma and Roy in the Gigi number could have been a touch sexier! Joan and Iain sang well in Master of the House and Emily and Katie produced a whole new aspect to I Hate Men in hating them and the housework! Later on it was Emily who Washed the Man out of her Hair and she sang it with real vigour. Darryl sang strongly in The Life I Led and acted well. Lynda sang a clear true Anthem and Bryony was truly believable in Far from the Home. We have so many memories of Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren in 'Doctor' that maybe it should have been spoken and not sung 'a la' Rex Harrison to get it across in the Peter and Sophia manner!

In Act II there was again a shortage of men though they performed valiantly in both Mikado and the South Pacific songs. What can I say about Bee's voice? One can hear the truly vocal sound with all that training behind it. Mio Bambino was beautiful and the Laughing Song likewise. I've already mentioned Lynda and when the two of them sang in the Cats' Duet it was magical. Claire, Emily, Helen and Katie were fine in Mama and Katie sang Argentina with feeling. Norma's solo Feed the Birds was nicely performed.

The set was necessarily and quite rightly simple with the Stewardess's galley and chair stage left with minimal seating and tables brought in as wanted. The back projection was innovative and

very effective. The pilots' cabin and the runway was a great touch. All the pictures representing the Countries were right in their genre, it was right to resist, for example, the pyramids for Egypt and using a bazaar. As 'backcloths' they were much admired. The props were fine. The costumes, of which were many of course, were imaginative and complemented the musicals they depicted, however Evita's seemed a little out of place and the men's Kimonos were a little odd. The full net petticoats were excellent but in that and in other numbers some ladies needed to have ordinary petticoats, it does make a great deal of difference to the figure and the movement of the dress.

The sound and lighting were fine the in-flight catering was a nice innovative touch, though with a drink as well we did find it difficult to cope as we did not have the luxury of a drop-down table!! However, along with the authentic announcements (A good sound again from the phone!), this did give us the impression that we were all 'On Board' ! As well as directing and writing the script Gloria did an excellent job as the stewardess. She and the cast are to be congratulated on the show.

The programme as an In-Flight Magazine was extremely colourful and well put together. I would have liked to have had, even though I did know, the names of the musicals from which the songs came. I think that the members of the audience need to have that information and I would also have liked the surnames of the artistes on the In Flight pages as this 'poor old reviewer' had to go to another page to marry up the two names.

Thank you for my warm welcome and your hospitality. It was good to see many old friends.