



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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FREDERICA

South Australian Light Opera Society Inc

Tower Arts Centre

Review by Simon Slade

The Tower Arts Centre has been renovated with, we are told, \$880,000. Imagine the equipment and facilities that sort of money can buy. Imagine the new rigging system. Imagine the new lighting control system and patch bay. Imagine the new heights that a community theatre group could reach with all that at their disposal.

Well imagine their dismay when they get to the venue. No orchestra pit anymore, no lighting bars, no dimmers, and a few electrical cords hanging from the ceiling wrapped in plastic garbage bags! It seems that someone at the Tower Arts Centre thought that some new seats and a new foyer were all that was required, along with interior décor that looks like a modern day "Baron of Beef" theatre restaurant!

Undaunted by this, the stalwarts of SALOS have produced this operetta about the life of the young Johann Goethe and the love of his life, Frederica.

Many of the voices are very good. Jeff Carter, as Goethe, and Deborah Witherspoon, as Frederica, both have excellent vocal ranges and projection, with their many years of experience. Ironically, those many years also count against them a little, as it is difficult for them to convince the audience that they are the young lovers of this tale. They are not the only ones, however, as many of the cast are well over the age range for their characters. Combined with a sense that the cast are under-directed, this detracts from the story.

Peter Potts, in the very funny role of Lenz does very well, and is also the Musical Director. Daphne Harris, despite her wealth of professional experience, had such problems with lines that at one point it seemed that the prompt would have a bigger speaking part than her!

One of the younger members of the cast, Alex Bond, managed to get a round of applause for some solo work. Deservedly so, as he has a fine voice, that showed strength and depth. With some closer attention to the details of his acting by a director, he will have a bright future in musical theatre.

The small orchestra is kept under tight control and the balance between vocals and music is generally right.

They do their very best to get the most out of some lovely scenes, and some of the wonderfully lyrical songs, with a fine variety of costumes, set and props.