



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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A JOLLY JAZZY CHRISTMAS

South Australian Light Opera Society Inc

Tower Arts Centre

Until 16 December 2007

Review by Simon Slade

Here is a show jam-packed with a wide variety of music, not all constrained by a Christmas theme. Solos, chorus numbers and medleys make for a programme that has something for everyone, and has the audience leaving the theatre feeling both jolly and jazzy.

Happily the technical facilities at the Tower Arts Centre have improved after the disastrous state it was in after the renovations. There are now some lighting bars and dimmers! The flat floor stage and lack of a pit suits the concert style of this show very well.

As is usual with SALOS shows, the vocal quality of the better performers is quite high. Elly Vink delights with her solo of 'I Could Have Danced All Night' and the duet 'This is My Lovely Day' with David Roberts, who also showed good solo work with 'Some Enchanted Evening.' Roberts also provides some amusing banter linking some of the sections of the show.

Among the younger performers, Siobhan Owen had more than a few eyes moistening with 'The Ash Grove,' and also 'Spinning Song.' Tenor Alex Bond impresses with 'Torna a Surriento' and 'The Lord's Prayer.' The strength of his voice was also used to carry some of the lesser voices in the chorus numbers.

The musical accompaniment of Mary Greig on piano, and flautist Bernie Williamson, is very good, with nearly all of the arrangements suiting the songs very well.

In this concert setting, the lighting needed to be a little more varied, although in fairness the operator does have to leave his post on occasions as he is also in the show!

If there is a prominent flaw with this show it is that not enough attention has been paid to directing the dramatic elements. As such, despite some amusing material, the 'News in Brief' sketch does not flow. What should have been an hilarious take on the Toni Basil hit 'Mickey' left many in the audience thinking it was under-rehearsed, rather than an amusing take on the buffoonery of young men surrounded by cheerleaders. Similar comic opportunities with 'O Sole Mio' where the joke is even flagged by the spelling in the programme – 'O Solo Mio' – and with 'Santa Lucia' are also missed.

That is a pity, as it detracts from the quality and attention paid in other areas, but it is the singing that is the main reason to see this show.