



Adelaide Theatre Guide

www.theatreguide.com.au

Supporting live theatre in South Australia

PO Box 738
MODBURY SA 5092

info@theatreguide.com.au
ABN : 93 297 960 525

CLASS OF CABARET

Adelaide Cabaret Festival

Space Theatre

Until 26 June 2021

Review by Brendan Watts

For the last 11 years "Class of Cabaret" has been showcasing the talents of senior students from across South Australia, allowing them the framework to develop and premiere original works in front of an informed and appreciative audience. This year has been no exception, with Director Sasha Zahra utilising her extensive experience to deliver another breath-taking experience.

As you enter the Space Theatre you are taken back through a portal into the smoke ridden, bohemian rooms of traditional cabaret. The intimate performance space was simply decorated with a mixture of peacock feathers and flowers to create an atmosphere to match the variety that was to follow. The stage lacked any distractions from the performers, boasting only a piano and chairs for them to sit on. Together with the low and sultry lighting, the scene was well set for us to receive the stars of the show.

As accompanist Alex Wignall began to play the piano, all 18 of the performers graced the stage and we were introduced to the harmonious sounds of the entire cohort as they invited us to "Rise up". Vocal coach Rosie Hosking (well known to seasoned ATG followers after she was awarded the ATG Curtain Call Award for Best Professional Female Performance in 2012) would have been proud of the way that their voices complemented each other to perfection.

In their first year as mentors, Joanne Hartstone and Hew Parham provided a brief background to the journey undertaken by the performers, from their auditions in November last year to the opportunity to develop and premiere new works for tonight's performance.

As they left the stage, the audience took a breath, preparing for the ride to follow.

As Kim confidently strode to centre stage and began to sing in Chinese, ably balanced by the other performers, it was plain to see the chemistry between all involved. Her message was one of overcoming the prejudice of others through music. Her great vocal range and strength of voice was well matched by her appropriate use of modulation to convey her spoken messages. The audience was easily convinced to "embrace their inner choir kid".

Angus then conveyed to us his concerns regarding the evils of social media and how society needs to be more connected, as there is strength in our diversity. He sang about how we should "Be ourselves", accompanying himself on guitar. Transitioning to the piano he then discussed the anti-social media and how it can hurt us, before reminding us that we are "Never on your own". A timely and well-presented reminder that we need to put our phones down and see each other more face to face. The simple use of soft colours in the lighting complimented this well.

Karina then asked us "Have you ever felt lonely?" Her heartfelt story about choosing to appreciate those around you, rather than dwelling on imagining people that are not, was clearly communicated via her well-chosen words and lyrics. Her duet with Charlee was a highlight of the show, with their voices blending together beautifully. With a shout out to all single parents we were reminded that "All is new" and "You were not alone".



Adelaide Theatre Guide

www.theatreguide.com.au

Supporting live theatre in South Australia

PO Box 738
MODBURY SA 5092

info@theatreguide.com.au
ABN : 93 297 960 525

Jaxon had the audience in the palm of his hand right from his first words... "I love Star Wars!" to his closing number "High Anxiety – You win!". As he regaled us of his love of the Vendetta Class Star Destroyer, we were drawn into his story of living with neuro-divergence and being "on the spectrum". The use of a recorded voice over and innovative lighting to convey his inner monologue was very effective and the audience was left wanting more from this talented performer.

A self-professed lover of storytelling, Anastasia invited us to listen as she told her story of a starving artist, happy to be heard by a small but appreciative audience. The audience drifted along the river of her words, supported and given depth by the piano accompanist and skilful manipulation of her voice. As her stars faded, we were reminded that "It's time" to love and to appreciate the time that we have now, as it will soon be over. A powerful performance that had the audience hanging on her every word, but as she finished with "It's time that I move on...".

Utilising her own lyrics to the well-known Cyndi Lauper tune "Time after time", Abbey described her journey from anxiously standing alone side of stage to being on stage and confidently performing with the entire ensemble. Her use of foot taps to emphasise her racing heartbeat worked well and she further demonstrated the depth of her talents with the inclusion of a tap routine as well. As her set concluded, we could all agree that "I've had the time of my life".

Next we heard Jordan use his amazing, Gospel style voice to reassure us that there is nothing wrong with loving who you are. Oozing confidence, the warmth and depth of his performance convinced us to ignore the judgement of others and strive to be our best, genuine selves. His confidence and stage presence kept the audience engaged from the start to his Elvis style finale Let there be Peace on Earth".

Erin took the stage and provided a superbly emotive performance, describing the impact of her father on her life and career; and the struggles that had arisen due to Covid pulling her apart from him. The imagery created from her rewritten lyrics to Lukas Graham's 7 years, pulled at the heart strings of all listening.

The final solo performer, Charlee, then asked us to reflect on the stars and wonder at what the future holds for humanity and the wider planet. Through the use of David Bowie's "Space Oddity" and Zager and Evans' "In the year 2525" she held the audience captive, engrossed by the perfection of her voice control and insistence that "We can all be heroes for just one day".

To round out the performance the entire ensemble joined to sing "Don't stop me now, I'm having a good time". The infectious joy on their faces, transferring to the audience.

The brief from Alan Cumming to "embrace variety and be authentic and topical" was not only met, but clearly exceeded by all involved.

Featuring students from Cedar College, Christian Brothers College, Cornerstone College, Gawler and District College, Gleeson High School, Henley High School, Nazareth Catholic College, Pembroke School, Prince Alfred College, Saint Joseph's School Port Lincoln, St Francis de Sales College, Thebarton Senior College, Trinity Senior College, Westminster School and Woodville High School; Class of Cabaret certainly showcased the best young talent that the state has to offer.

The future of Cabaret is definitely very bright indeed!