

BACK TO THE 20TH CENTURY

Top of the Torrens Theatre Group

Angaston Town Hall
Until June 25

Review by Simon Slade

From Mama Cass to Tina Turner, via ABBA and the Beatles, the audience is kept entertained by a number of talented performers. The styles are intended to mirror those of the original performers, and are generally done well.

Lyndall Plummer is a convincing Roy Orbison and we are treated to one set from the Big O in each act. He really captured the style of Orbison and handled the vocals well in all his numbers apart from the difficult "Crying," which seemed to test the limits of his range.

Tony Buck's voice is well suited to the Beatles numbers and a few other 60s hits thrown in for good measure. He handles the timing and tone of "Ferry 'Cross the Mersey" very well.

Lisa Angwin stands out as Tina Turner performing "Proud Mary," and really gets the audience up and dancing to "Nutbush City Limits," along with the other cast members who dance along with the audience. Gloria Seymour is excellent as Linda Ronstadt; with her 1997 hit "Blue Bayou" and as Cass Elliot (in her Mama Cass persona) with "Dream a Little Dream of Me." She also shows a great sense of humour in her roles throughout the show.

Not to be outdone, the younger women in the show get some good opportunities, and showed a great sense of professionalism in the face of a microphone problem during "To Sir with Love."

There is a nice band at work here, and some members perform other roles. Zeke Natrass stands out as a talented lead guitarist, who also throws his heart and soul into the dance numbers. Here is a young man we are sure to see more off. Young Dane Plummer, at only 11, deserves a special mention for his work on the guitar and his role in some of the songs.

Unfortunately, the band does not perform enough of the time in the show, but MIDI files are being used. Gloria Seymour's sense of humour was brought to bear when she had to bop along to a bad MIDI sax solo – she almost brought the house down! A number of the songs seemed to have been sequenced with a repeat-and-fade ending, making life hard for the singers. The lighting is patchy, with unnecessary blackouts at inopportune times, but some of the effects and chases are good.

But it is the music that carries this show, and the audience loved it.