

## **HIGH SOCIETY**

### **Therry Dramatic Society**

Arts Theatre

Until June 18

Review by Andy Ahrens

Therry's latest offering of Cole Porter's "High Society" is a delightful night of mischief, gossip, romance and laughs in a well staged and entertaining production.

The plot is thin, revolving around a planned wedding between Tracy Lord (Alexandra Gard) and George Kittredge (Greg Hart). But things get interesting when some unexpected guests arrive, including Tracy's ex-husband Dexter Haven (David Probert).

Gard is wonderfully in voice and character as bride to be. She is supported by a strong cast including Trish Spence, Richard Greig and Julia Whittle who each have their own tender moments.

Along with Gard, two other performances stand out. Andrew Crayford as Uncle Willie yet again plays the comic to perfection. His solo performance of "Say it with Gin" has the audience in stitches. Fifteen-year-old Sarah Spaven as Dinah Lord shows a rare maturity for her age. Spaven looks totally at home in a sensational performance - a star of the future.

The well balanced ensemble is just as delightful as the leads. Renditions of 'High Society', "She's Got That Thing" and "Let's Misbehave" have the toes tapping.

Choreographer Melanie George has given the production just the right dose of complexity in the moves.

Musical Direction by Ben Saunders is only let down on the odd occasion by some soft entries and unclear diction in Act I. Otherwise, Saunders should take credit for keeping the pace constant and picking up cues nicely, in a well sung production.

Director Ian Rigney has focused on tightness and fluency in this production to great effect and the attention to detail is obvious. The sets are simple and effective allowing for smooth transitions between scenes (hoorah – no pauses for scene changes!). Lighting Design by Denise Lovick is notably special.

Opening on a Thursday night limits the amount of rehearsal time in the theatre and there was more than one hiccup on opening night. But these, and a few slow moments in Act I, are easily overshadowed by strong performances and plenty of humour.

"High Society" with its tuneful melodies and light-hearted fun does not fail to leave the audience on a high.