

Directed and Choreographed by Sallie Warrington

Skipping choreography by Jenny Gayner

Musical Direction by Robert Wicks

Performed at the Civic Theatre Chelmsford on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March

From the opening number to curtain down, this show was full of fantastic performances from both principals and ensemble, with lots of energy and some brilliant vocals. This musical is full of catchy fun music, following the journey of Elle Woods, a Delta Nu sorority girl, who follows her heart to Harvard Law School to prove she is 'Serious' about his love.

Keeley Denman, as Elle Woods was on stage for the majority of the show, with some big songs and dances to contend with. This was a very demanding role which Keeley managed brilliantly. Keeley was well supported by Charlotte Broad, Natasha Lesley and Jill Gordon who did a great job as Elle's friends, and of course the rest of the Greek chorus well. Each girl had her own personality and this was shown to us successfully. There were some great dance numbers, generally very slick routines that everyone danced confidently!

Warner Huntington III played by Jacob Burtenshaw was suitably dislikeable in his role, and worked well with Claire Carr as Vivienne. Claire played Vivienne in just the right way. We disliked her to start with and then as she grew, we started to warm to her. Fantastic vocals from Claire as well, particularly in *Find My Way*.

Paulette Bonafonte played by Robyn Gowers was fantastic, so much stage presence! Robyn gave Paulette some really quirky characteristics, plenty of energy and the warmth that Elle needed to get her through. Some brilliant vocals, and a great connection with Kyle the UPS guy played by Brad Wendes.

A special mention must go to Becki Wendes for her performance as Brooke Wyndham. She had a great rapport with Elle but also *Whipped Into Shape* was incredible; to keep those vocals as strong as they were while skipping is a real achievement.

Professor Callaghan, played by Patrick Tucker, was suitably sleazy, while still being commanding as the professor of the class. There were a few shaky moments in his delivery, but he stayed in character throughout. Despite Callaghan's nature - Emmett Forrest, played by David Gillett, still wants to impress him. David played Emmett with the genuine nature we would expect, and had a lovely voice. There was a particularly lovely moment for Emmett and Elle in *Legally Blonde*.

There were lots of lovely moments in the show for individuals, some heartwarming and some comedy moments. I really loved *Legally Blonde remix*, so full of energy and excitement and an Irish jig for good measure. I also liked *Gay or European*. Dannii Carr and Tom Harper did a great job as Nikos and Carlos. Tom in particular oozed energy! *Bend and Snap* was another highlight, with lots of attitude from the girls.

On the whole this was a very good production. The scene changes were disappointing though. They happened frequently, were slow and looked messy and were often done in full light by crew not dressed in black, but not dressed to fit the show either. This aspect really detracted from the professional performance delivered by some members of the cast.

There were a few wobbly moments where singing was out of time with the music or words were stumbled on, and a few questionable accents. The band, led by Robert Wickes sounded great throughout, and the sound balance between the band and voices was generally good. Although the lighting plot worked well for the scenes, there were quite a lot of reflective surfaces in the set, and quite often bright beams were bounced back into the audience making it difficult to focus on the action sometimes.

I couldn't possibly forget Huli and Casey-Lulu who stole the scenes as Bruiser and Rufus- they appeared to behave themselves on stage which is also a great achievement. I left feeling really cheerful and upbeat, congratulations on a great show.

Reviewed by Alexandra Berriman  
Assistant rep for District 8 and Youth Adviser  
NODA East