

This new Fair Lady is fairest I've ever seen

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THIS production of a 'draggletailed guttersnipe' bettering herself has to be among the finest I have ever seen on stage.

The cast's obvious enjoyment in their work was transmitted across the footlights with sparkle and enormous humour.

Ray Jeffries directed, highlighting the funny and moving story behind the musical.

Claire McGeogh as Eliza? Well, move over Julie Andrews, you were beaten in every department - singing, acting and dancing.

Her spirited and dramatic version of 'Show Me' left me with goose pimples.

David Hawkins as the professor had the unenviable task of keeping up with her and maintaining faultless diction. He acquitted himself with a well-judged blend of perplexed irascibility.

Patrick Tucker was a total star as Eliza's father, strutting round the stage larger than life creating a heady mix of roguery and East End jollity with a fine voice.

The talented Peter Smith was suitably

My Fair Lady Cramphorn Theatre

deferential as Higgins colleague and conscience, while Barry 'On the Street Where you Live' Hester was convincing as a slightly pathetic upper class twit with an extraordinary voice.

Every scene was beautifully set with stunning costumes.

I particularly took to the Ascot scene - hard to produce the goods when everyone expects excellence - but they did.

The singing was confident, clear and well-balanced - a tribute to the musical director Andrew Denyer and to the welcome proliferation of radio microphones. The orchestration was rich, crisp and tuneful.

If this were a West End production, coaches would be coming in from all over England to see it. Encore please.

Jim Hutchon

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