

## Anything Goes

Civic Theatre, Chelmsford

CAODS

Directed by Ray Jeffry

Musical Direction by Bryan Cass

Choreography by Claire Carr

We were greeted by a fantastic ship on the stage with 2 sets of stairs at the front, with the band all seated on the top at the back visible to us.

The cast were all introduced to us during the overture with a series of freeze frames in spotlights. This certainly set the tone of the characters we would soon meet on board the ship and get to know as the show progressed.

Robyn Gowers commanded the stage as Reno Sweeney, giving us a confident performance as the sassy and mature leading lady. Her Angels, Keely, Hollie, Olivia and Natasha worked very well together as Chastity, Charity, Purity and Virtue. They expertly worked the stage, making the most of their characters. Robyn led *Blow Gabriel Blow* with ease, and this was definitely one of the best numbers in the show.

Tom Harper was fantastic as Billy Crocker. He didn't falter in his energy and commitment to the role. Tom is a natural on stage, and this role gave him the chance to show off his ability. A particular highlight for me was *All Through The Night* with Hope.

Kieran Bacon as Moonface Martin was brilliant, perfect comedy timing and oozing character. Kieran gave us his best gangster, he worked really well with Jill Gordon, playing Bonnie. Bonnie was bubbly and bright in an innocent way, despite her association with Public Enemy Number 13! Both were great to watch.

*Friendship*, sung by Reno, Billy and Moonface was great, simply danced but sung really well.

Katie Doran as Hope, and Kevin Abrey and Sir Evelyn both worked really well together. They gave us very upper class performances and maintained good accents throughout, they both interacted well with Helen Hart as Mrs Harcourt.

David Slater gave us just the right level of comedy as Elisha J Whitney, and it was clear he was enjoying his role in this production making the most of his one liners in this character part.

Supported by the smaller roles John Sullivan gave us the traditional captain, Dannii Carr was always on the alert as the steward ready to serve the guests, Ching and Ling Kris and Craig Tyler both kept us entertained with their 'over the top' accents and comedy movements. The rest of the company did a great job filling the stage with the various guests on the ship and the smaller roles like reporters. The stage was often filled with dancers; some fantastic numbers with everyone involved, and was a real achievement. *Heaven Hop* was a great number with lots of people involved and *Anything Goes* led by Bonnie, at the end of Act 1

was amazing - so high energy with some brilliant tap routines - and as I previously mentioned *Blow Gabriel Blow* was a fantastic number.

There were so many costumes, with some beautiful dresses for the ladies; and slightly simpler sailor costumes for the gentleman. But nevertheless, everyone looked great on the stage. The sound levels were always good, with a good balance between the band and voices throughout. The lighting worked for the requirements of the show.

And with Ray Jeffery at the helm, and Bryan Cass leading us musically and Claire Carr as choreographer, the show was expertly led. Culminating in the double wedding, the show leaves you tapping your feet and humming the tunes! Congratulations to all involved.

Review by Alexandra Berriman. Youth Adviser and Regional Rep for D8.