

It looks like another hit for CAODS

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN
Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and
Dramatic Society, Civic Theatre

ALTHOUGH I saw this lavish and glittering production on the opening night, the signs were there that CAODS had another hit on their hands.

Jeremy Tustin's rendition of the fabled Hollywood movie – where the onset of sound in movies decimated acting careers – was true to the original and treated to an endless series of stunning production numbers with no-expense-spared costumes and beautifully figured backdrops.

Of the male stars, Jonathon Underwood has a great voice and commanding stage presence which helped him carry off the famous lead role. But for sheer verve on stage, with some extraordinary physical action and great comic timing, I tip my hat to a real song and dance man, Nick Court.

I also adored the sheer commitment of Karen Lamont as the threatened actress with a voice that could tarnish a mirror. Cassie Todd has the part of the dubbing singer, but

managed to wring some good stage work out of an otherwise stifflingly goodie role.

The narrative drive, such as it was, received scant attention between these numbers, but who remembers the movie – other than Gene Kelly's skating over wet pavements.

So too with this production, which went for actual rain in a carefully contrived, but effective wet scene staged like a giant shower set.

The CAODS band – under the direction of Andrew Denyer – was in fine tune and ran through the well-known numbers without a hitch. In fact, the finest moment of the night for me was a Rhapsody in Blue number with a sinuous and skilful dance team which was pure delight.

I gather the show is close to a sell-out (just as well with the cost of a production like this), but it is on until Saturday October 2 and would be well-worth checking the box office for tickets.

JIM HUTCHON