

Sister Act

Shenfield Operatic Society

Date

28 February 2015

Venue

Queens Theatre, Hornchurch

Type of Production

Musical

Producer / Director

James Sinclair

Musical Director

Rob Miles

Review

Author: Tessa Davies

This show is a dream for any amateur society to do. It has great music, lots of parts for female performers and plenty of opportunity for comedy. No wonder then, that the Rights Holders initially limited the licences they issued. Shenfield Operatic certainly did the show proud. The entire cast performed with enthusiasm and energy.

Kerry Cooke gave a terrific performance in the lead role of Doloris Van Cartier; proving that, if you have the right actress in the role, ethnicity is irrelevant. Her characterisation was terrific and her singing was outstanding. The three main supporting nuns played by Liberty Watts (Sister Mary Robert) Helen Sinclair (Sister Mary Patrick) and Maria Coston (Sister Mary Lazarus) were all excellent. David Pridige played the policeman Eddie very well, plenty of humour and an outstanding solo song. Both Lynne Barry, playing the Mother Superior, and Bill Jaycock, playing Monsignor O'Hara, had good characterisations although I wasn't too keen on the English accents!

I really liked the three 'stooges' played by Allister Smith (Joey) David Ward (Pablo) and Jack Lloyd (TJ) some excellent comedy timing from all three and their song was great fun. The remainder of the Principals gave good performances and the whole cast produced performances that were a credit to the society. I must compliment the 'Nuns chorus', there were a lot of them, which made the singing very strong and, fortunately the large stage at the Queens Theatre was able to accommodate all of them. The whole cast looked and sounded as though they were having a really good time!

The scenery was terrific, although the scene changes were a bit slow which did affect the pace of the performance. Costumes were lovely and all the on stage costume changes worked really well. The band was well balanced and with one small exception did not drown out the solo performers.

I was very disappointed with the sound technician; the mics were consistently turned up late, often missing the whole first sentence of the actor's dialogue. There were several occasions when the mics had been turned down mid scene and then not turned up in time for the performer's full speech or song to be heard. There is just no excuse for this on the Saturday evening performance and it is very unfair to the performers who have the first words of their dialogue unheard. Looking at the programme, it would appear that the services of a professional sound team were brought in. Frankly, they didn't do a good enough job.

That apart, this was a blockbusting performance from Shenfield Operatic and I was pleased to see that the auditorium was full. Well done to everyone.