

NATIONAL OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION LONDON REGION

Society ; Sainsbury Singers
Production ; "RED HOT AND COLE"
Date ; Saturday 2nd November 2013
Venue ; Leighton Park School, Reading
Report by ; Henry Hawes – NODA Representative – Area 13

On Saturday 2nd November 2013, I was pleased to be invited to review the Sainsbury Singers latest production "Red Hot & Cole" which loosely depicted the life story of Cole Porter. Of all the compilation shows which have emerged over recent years, I think this is one of the best; the story line is good coupled with Cole Porter's wonderful music. It is believed that Cole Porter wrote some 2000 songs and on the night we were presented with some 38 of his most well known ones, together with numerous characters that featured in Cole Porter's life. All presented on an open stage with good singing and movement making a pleasant evening's entertainment.

Louise Quelch – (ELSA MAXWELL) Emma Prince – (IRENE CASTLE)
Brian Bretney – (MOSS HART) Hannah Wyard – (SARA MURPHY)
Matt Smith – (COLE PORTER) Stephen Cox – (MONTY WOOLEY / RAY GOETZ)
Tricia Goodchild – (LINDA PORTER) Lorraine Cox – (ADA 'BRICKTOP' SMITH)
Gareth Wells – (YOUNG MAN/PAUL) Jackie Stoffels – (COUNTESS / BELLA SPEWACK)
Helen Long – (ETHEL MERMAN) Hilary Latimer – (DOROTHY PARKER)
Sara El-Hanfy – (STARLET) Jessamy Vincent – (HEDDA HOPPER)
Marek Rakowski – (WAITER) Chris Reeves – (NOEL COWARD / PHOTOGRAPHER)

Michael Schult – (CLIFTON WEBB / ENGLISH SOLDIER / GEORGE KAUFMAN / SAM KATZ / DOCTOR / DRUNK)) – This compilation show gives opportunity to many members taking principal roles, particularly as there are some 16 major and minor roles with some 38 musical numbers to sing. I have combined the above principals together as each and every one gave an excellent portrayal of the various characters. The singing, dancing and characterisation of the various characters were good. I have combined you all together as there was nothing I could fault or criticize – Well done

Other party guests

Godfrey Chigona, Helen Gordon, Catherine Hannan, Emily Hiscock, Valda Hull, Laurent Petithuguenin, Emma Reeves, Denise Schult, Chris Thomas, Helen Thomas – This group i.e., 'The Chorus', did sterling work lending their voices to the many concerted number so that we were presented with a full-bodied sound with a good balance of voices.

"Begin the Beguine" Dancers

Brian Bretney, Godfrey Chigona, Sara El-Hanfy, Helen Gordon, Catherine Hannan, Laurent Petithuguenin, Emma Prince, Emma Reeves, Denise Schult, Jackie Stoffels, Chris Thomas, Hannah Wyard – This group entered whole heartedly into the choreographic routines with controlled movements and in particular an extensive tap routine which had impact although

I wonder if it had lesser numbers in the routine, would it have had more impact, I'm not sure – Irrespective of that remark congratulations.

"Kiss Me Kate" Dancers

Catherine Hannan, Emma Prince, Denise Schult, Hannah Wyard – This is another group of dancers who interpreted the number very well with precise movement – Well done.

Robert Nell – (POT BOY) – Well done on taking on this minor role and making it your own.

Kim Antell – (PRODUCER & CHOREOGRAPHER)

Denise Schult - (ASSISTANT TO PRODUCER & DANCE CAPTAIN) – I have always thought that this particular theatres unusual format lends itself to open stage productions so I was pleased to see that the producer **Kim Antell** together with **Denise Schult**, assistant, had used the open stage format to good effect with intelligent positioning of the cast in the various scenarios which ensured there was a good flow to the proceedings. I did however feel that the choreographic routines were somewhat repetitious and a smaller number in the tap routine would have had more impact – Apart from those small points – Well done.

Jon Brooks - (MUSICAL DIRECTOR) – The music was supplied by piano played by the musical director **Jon** with percussionist **Julian Brown** and which blended well with the performers. The cast had obviously been well rehearsed in the many musical numbers with a good balance of voices in the concerted numbers.

Stage Manager – The control of the stage by **John Simmonds** was effective ensuring the whole production ran smoothly.

Lighting Design & Operation – I was impressed of the lighting design by **Kim Hollamby**. It ensured the right atmosphere was generated by the use of overhead spots and colour, highlighting various areas of the open stage which was essential as there was no scenery and which went a long way in making this production the success it was. Control on the night of my visit by **Becca Simons** was well cued – Congratulations.

Follow Spots – **Louis Martin** and **Kirsty Darbourn** kept a good control on the follow spots ensuring they were well focussed.

Sound Design & Operation – The sound design by **Chris Dinsey** and **Ian Reeves** was well controlled with voices being amplified without distortion and a good balance – Well Done

Props – **Helen Gordon** and **Robert Nel** were responsible for the props which had been well researched and looked authentic.

Wardrobe – The costumes had been devised by **Amanda Bretney** giving a good flavour of the period and fitting the various characters on display. **Emma Reeves** as the supervisor ensured the cast were properly dressed

Make-up, Hair and Wigs – Stage make-up designed by **Kerry Woodley** appeared to have been applied correctly, looking good under the lights. Hair and wigs had been fashioned in the style of the period.

Programme – A very nice programme of the right size. It contained a wealth of information, well laid out with good cast and rehearsal photographs all contained in a cover with a relevant picture.

Front of House – The Front of House team must have found it difficult operating in the confined space available, which was minimal having to accommodate both the Box Office and Bar.

Thank you for the invitation to review your latest show "*Red Hot and Cole*" and look forward to your next production "*Carousel*".

Henry

NODA Representative – London Region – Area 13