



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Society : The Sainsbury Singers
Production : Godspell
Date : Thursday 26th October
Venue : Oakwood Centre - Woodley
Report by : Jeanette Maskell

Show Report

Godspell is one of my all-time favourite musicals. Not only is it humorous and entertaining but powerful passionate and emotionally charged.

In this production every single member of the cast committed fully to the concept and got into the spirit of the piece from the outset. They worked as a team and supported each other through every moment of this impassioned rollercoaster ride.

Stephen Cox – (Jesus) – This was an absorbing awe inspiring performance; being fervent and ardent. I was impressed with the change in his character through the second act and the way his dialogue accommodated this transition. You could see the pride he took in his followers as he watched from the peripheral and the anger he felt as they did not understand or come up to his expectations. His gait was calm and placid as he moved around the acting area; although not a natural dancer he held his own in “All for the Best”. His visuals were warm and appealing and his dialogue complemented this perfectly. “Alas for You” was spine tingling and truly outstanding and the only reason he did not receive the applause he deserved was because the audience were so emotionally involved they did not want to break the spell of the moment!

Brian Bretney – (John the Baptist/Judas) – I enjoyed this performance very much. Following the philosopher’s he started proceedings from the back of the auditorium with a well sung “Prepare Ye”. His John the Baptist was questioning demanding and completely devoted to Jesus. His dialogue was powerfully energetic with great inflection. His movement was light and agile; again not a natural mover but held his own in a fun rendition of “All for the Best”. As Judas he was angry confused and guilt ridden. This was all conveyed through compelling vigorous dialogue and robust dominant movement.

Lorraine Cox – This young lady was lovey; she moved well and sang beautifully. Her voice was effortless and really suited her solo “Learn your Lessons Well”

Rob Latimer – This actor portrayed his character with a sense of fun; his dialogue was clear and audible and his singing in “Light of the World” animated and tuneful.

Gareth Wells – The innocence of this performance was absolute. His visuals dialogue and singing were all first rate and “All Good Gifts” was superb and effortlessly sung.

Emma Reeves – For me this young lady was delightfully charismatic and her singing quite sublime. “Day by Day” was expressive and touching. A real highlight of the evening!

Jessamy Vincent – This young lady was full of fun and laughter. Her character shone as she moved from scene to scene. “Turn back o Man” was teasingly sassy and delivered with real pizzazz.

Martyna Sharma – As an actress this young lady was outstanding her facial expressions were a joy. “Bless the Lord” was upbeat and rousing

Helen Thomas – This young lady was plaintive both in her acting and singing and this really enhanced her part in “By my Side”. She has a warm endearing voice and it blended perfectly with Loraine’s and their harmonies were exquisite.

Chris Thomas – “We Beseech Thee” sung by this actor was great fun! He had the audience with him from the off and kept them engaged throughout.

Collectively this group bounced off one another creating a tight knit group. They laughed together cried together and held the audience in the palm of their hand. The last supper was powerfully portrayed and the display of emotion from all involved was overwhelming.

Other followers of Jesus – This ensemble supported the main cast with alacrity passion and a vivacious energy. I must congratulate Emily Hannah Hilary Louise and Steve for their poignant rendition of “On the Willows” the harmonies were just delightful. Also a special mention to Steve for his accomplished sax solo in “In all Good Gifts” I would also like to mention Federico Donati who is a wonderful dancer and his part in “All for the Best” was superb!

Wendy Carne – (Producer/Director) – Wendy is to be congratulated on a meaningful poignant and convincing piece of theatre. She had encouraged the cast to take on their roles with a childish innocence which really worked. Her groupings and blocking were fabulous and I loved the freezes she created throughout which fitted the moment perfectly. There were some lovely touches and I particularly enjoyed the “Good Samaritan” which was such a clever idea and really amusing. As the show is only written for 10 performers it is a credit to her that she utilised the additional performers in such a way that they became part of the whole taking part in the parables and enjoying their own dialogue and singing.

Cameron Baker – (Musical Director) – This MD had clearly put in a lot of time and effort with the performers to ensure they knew every note entry and tempo. As the band was situated in the balcony he had a major task in controlling both so they came together harmoniously. This he did brilliantly and the balance he achieved between band and stage was absolutely perfect. I must complement his fine musicians they were quite outstanding and gave the score the justice it deserved.

Denise Schult – (Choreographer) – This young lady always manages to create some unique and varied routines which are energetic and lively yet simple enough to ensure the whole cast can perform them with precision. The two things she likes most is the use of patterns for which she has an expert eye and armography both of which were used here to maximum effect.

Kazia Grainger/Catherine Hannan – (Assistant Producers) – This pair had obviously worked extremely hard in conjunction with the producer to bring this performance to fruition. Everything

had been coordinated perfectly ensuring the smooth running of the show from get in to technicians front of house and stage.

Kim Hollamby/Becca Simons – (Lighting Designer/Operator) – I know how partial this technician is to the use of red lighting. On this occasion he was able to use it to great effect in creating the power of evil. Spots were also used effectively and sometimes the cast actually managed to stand in them! The spot on Jessamy in the opening of act 2 was brilliant quite a feat considering she was up in the balcony. The whole plot complemented the action giving it quality and purpose

John Simmonds – (Stage Manager) – and his crew **Joe Daniels** having a static set with no changes this SM and his crew were really there to ensure nothing untoward happened and keep entrances clear for cast to get on and off stage.

Kazia Grainger/Wendy Carne – (Props/Set) – I liked the messy cluttered look of the random artefacts strewn around the edge of the stage it gave the proceedings a certain appeal. All props were appropriate for their use and I found some of them rather traditional like the bucket and sponge for the baptism and others quite unique like the saucepan lids used to signify an end to a parable.

Amanda BretneyEmma Reeves – (Wardrobe Team) – Costumes had been chosen to suit the character and I'm guessing that the cast had a hand in their preferred choice of skirt trousers or shorts. However it is important to have someone to coordinate the overall look and this team ensured that was the case.

Catherine Hannan/Rachel Sargeant – (Makeup) – this was excellent with a heavy base and bright well defined eyes which gave them real sparkle.

Catherine Hannan – (Hair & Wigs) – I don't believe I saw anyone wearing a wig but if they were I apologise that I missed it. However hairstyles were suitably out there befitting the characters.

John Jones – (Front of House Manager) – John always runs a smart outfit and looks after me especially well; and this evening was no different. Thank you

Thank you

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Jeanette Maskell - NODA Representative - London Region - Area 13