

The Pump House Children & Youth Theatre
BLITZ
The Pump House Theatre
24th January 2008
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Another triumph for this talented young company and a brave venture too. For the cast to transport themselves back 70 years was no mean feat, and to act the roles of characters in those dreadful times was asking a lot. But they did it superbly and turned the story into marvellous entertainment.

Director Robin Scarborough had done a fantastic job with these youngsters, so much so that they seemed so natural in their various roles. The entire company were marvellous the way they stayed in character plus the enthusiasm portrayed.

M.D. Lee Farman also brought the music to life with the songs, most of which are not well known and difficult to sing. My favourites were "The Day after Tomorrow" was really lovely with beautiful harmonies, "Far Away" sung with great feeling by Saoirse, "So Tell Me" which brought tears to my eyes, and of course "Mums and Dads" which was a show stopper. The Band was excellent also.

I know you had a double cast so I can only comment on the performances seen on the Wednesday evening but I am sure the others were equally as good.

What can I say about NIAMH BREWER playing Mrs Blitztein? Just superb, an outstanding actress for one so young, and so compelling to watch too. I wish you had not decided to pad her out in such a strange way as was off-putting to start with. Maybe her faced could have been aged a bit; some shadows under her careworn eyes, & a few wrinkles? However that did not detract from her performance which was fantastic, acting, singing and portrayal. Not only wonderful acting but a great singing voice too and completely convincing as the Jewish mother hen coping with the family during the war. She was very funny too in the battles going on with Alfie Lock.- what a pair those two were.

Her ongoing enemy, apart from the Germans, was Alfred magnificently portrayed by SEAN LOVELL. He really liked an argument and remembering the previous war by getting together with his mate Ernie, the equally fantastic ADAM FEIGHONEY. Now these two made a great comic duet as curmudgeonly crafty pair trying to get one over the Blitztein family. I was amazed to discover that they were both "young" as truly thought you had drafted in a couple of older actors. Both gave marvellous performances and kept in character throughout the show.

SAOIRSE BREWER was very natural playing Carol. She has a sweet voice so her songs came across beautifully, also being a good actress she portrayed the young girl in love very well. I found it very emotional watching

her after going blind, but again this was very naturally played. There was good charisma between her and Georgie, well portrayed by BARNEY LITTLE. I liked his bravado and cheekiness plus good rapport with his best mate Harry. GEORGE SLATER-WALKER was excellent as Harry, making the most of the war, trying to please his Mum while doing his own thing. Later as a deserter it all went wrong but he did come back to redeem himself at the end.

ROSIE SPEARPOINT was also good as the stroppy Elsie. This girl had attitude in abundance and played it to the hilt.

I also liked very much Mr & Mrs Joseph well played by BEN RHODES & LAUREN MURDOCH. Mrs Joseph was especially supportive of her friend Mrs Blitzstein plus a real East End character herself.

JESSICA SULLIVAN was also good as Joyce, the ambulance driver girl friend of Harry. Here was an upper class young lady completely natural out of her own surroundings but completely at her ease trying to be friendly. I liked her a lot.

The younger children were just wonderful, very natural indeed. I loved them singing "Mums and Dads" which was delightful, very comical, and a show stopper too. The rest of the massive cast, far too many to mention, were great and supportive in every scene.

Scenery was well designed and looked great. The S.M. and crew managed the many set changes slickly with music covering so we hardly noticed it.

Lighting design was excellent and expertly operated.

All the costumes looked great, really in period, so we got a strong image of those war torn days. Hair styles were also in period which made a big difference to the overall effect.

Sound and Effects were especially good, with special effects quite outstanding. A strange thing happened to me in the scene at Petticoat Lane. I don't know if it was the props or effects but I actually smelled the aroma of all the stuff on the stalls in the market. Did I imagine this or did you have real food? It could be that your props were so good visually that it all seemed real.

Thank you for inviting me to review your show, which as you can see from the above I really enjoyed very much. My congratulations to the entire company as I know you involve all members in the production, so well done.

Thanks also to Pat Hibberd and Robin Scarborough for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Josie
29/1/08