

## **BRANTHAM AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY**

**Anything Goes, music and lyrics by Cole Porter**

**Director Pippa Revell**

**Musical Director John Hoskyns**

**Choreographer Frankie Swan**

**Producer Tina Burns**

I was welcomed at Front of House and observed the opening set which depicted the bar of the SS American. I mention the set early as it really turned out to be quite amazing, simple in design but so flexible to use. Designed/modelled by MD John Hoskyns, and built by Phil Burns, Stage Manager, assisted by Geoff Hewitson and others, to swing and turn easily into position, it required little effort to change the scenes which was done quickly with no lengthy delays. I was particularly taken with the scene changes to the cabins and the outer deck of the boat.

After the overture at the beginning of Act One, the audience was introduced to Reno Sweeney, the nightclub singer, played by Jaquie Lewis. Jaquie had a strong and powerful delivery of her solo, I Get A Kick Out Of You. Billy Crocker, played by Oliver Fraser, was handsome, and dashing and determined in the pursuit of his love, Hope Harcourt, played by Sophie Mercer. However she is already engaged to Lord Evelyn Oakleigh, played by James Wetherall. Oliver had a tremendous and expressive voice and sang some tender and emotional duets with Sophie eg Easy To Love and All Through The Night. Sophie also had a strong vocal talent, with a sensitive expression.

Rob Warne played the ship's captain and Geoff Hewitson was the purser. Both were well cast and injected a good deal of comedy into the show. Davis Chilton was Elisha J Whitney, an interesting role which he played very well. Teresa Fraser played Evangeline Harcourt, determined to secure a good marriage for her daughter Hope, to Lord Oakleigh who is considerable older than Hope. Evangeline is inseparable from her little dog, Bentley who was so well behaved ! A gangster, Public Enemy Moonface Martin, played by Mark Hinson, was very evil and scheming and was excellent in this role. He was ably assisted by his "moll" Erma, played by Natalie Stock. With this duo, there were some good comedy moments.

Mike Brown was a fairly serious Rev Henry T Dobson but, again, brought some comedy to the role.

The three ladies, Charity, Purity and Virtue (!) were played by Frankie Swan, Katie Hinson and Connie Lewis and they were all quite delightful !

The cast was completed by Jess Ford and Lisa Butler ( Girls 1 and 2), Alan Jones, Daniel Esdale, Arjan Van Heuveln, Laura Pitchell, Toby Smith, all playing a range of small roles, vital to the plot.

The six juniors were very well rehearsed and sang Lady Fair with great enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. Well done Lilia, Hulya, Albert, Willow, Lexi and Isobel.

The chorus and dancers were on stage a lot and added a great deal to the performance. In fact, the dancing throughout was impressive, especially the tapping! Congratulations to choreographer, Frankie Swan, for utilising the different dancing abilities to good effect.

The band, led expertly by MD John Hoskyns, with Russ Harris and Felix Serrano was seated on a raised dais by the side of the stage and provided excellent backing and direction to the singers. The sound was just right for the size of the venue without overpowering the action on stage.

**The costumes, (Tina Burns, Geneva Downes, Teresa Fraser and Lesley Mercer) were true to the 1930s and were fabulous throughout but especially in the finale which involved the whole cast.**

**In all, this was a very polished performance from this society which reflected well the many talents within the group and provided a fun evening. Congratulations to Director, Pippa Revell, for her inspiration and creativity and well done to everyone involved in any way. The audience so obviously enjoyed the performance as I did.**

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