

WITHAM AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

The Young Frankenstein, book by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan, music and lyrics by Mel Brooks.

**Director and Choreographer Nikki Mundell-Poole
Musical Director James Tovey
Assistant to the Director Aimee Hart
Production Manager Paul Goddard**

Performed at Witham Public Hall on Friday 28th April 2023

I was warmly welcomed at Front of House by Donna Goddard and had the opportunity to speak with the Director/ Choreographer Nikki Mundell-Poole after the performance.

This was a very slick and accomplished musical production from this society from the very beginning. There was plenty of comedy and humour, double entendres and innuendo throughout performed by the large cast. There were lots of scene changes many projected onto a large video wall set within the overarching set of a castle/house. Props were introduced at relevant points eg furniture, direction signs (brain depository!) etc and I loved the control terminals for the monster. All very clever and innovative with scene changes achieved slickly and seemingly with minimum effort ! Sound and lighting, with special effects added much to the atmosphere. Costumes were attractive and in keeping with the times and setting and makeup throughout was most realistic.

Kris Tyler, as Frederick Frankenstein, was excellent in this major role with some great vocals throughout. Corrina Groombridge, as Elizabeth, the fiancé of Frederick, was a “dumb blonde” character with a powerful voice and magnificent stage presence. She impressed with her solos of “Please Don’t Touch Me” and “Deep Love”

Amy Pryce, playing the lab assistant, Inga, had a pivotal role in which she excelled. There was an uproarious scene in a woodland clearing involving Frederick and Inga frolicking in a hay cart which was so well played by the actors. I appreciated the two “human” horses in this scene !

William Hackett, as The Monster was superbly convincing. With his towering build and amazing prosthetics and makeup he looked the part, and he could sing and dance!

Michael Mundell-Poole played a fabulous role as Igor, a hunchback. He was nimble and energetic, cavorting around the stage and twisting his body into a myriad of strange and funny shapes. He had some great facial expressions.

Maeve Borges, as Frau Blucher was initially a forbidding and rather staid character but relaxed into a more empathetic figure eventually. She sang a first class solo of “He Vas My Boyfriend”.

Inspector Kemp, as played by Richard McNeill was a somewhat aimless and ridiculous character and Keith Harman, as The Hermit played this role well with a sensitive song in Act Two.

As well as the principals, there was a barbershop quartet (accomplished), Elizabeth's entourage (attractive), some very talented dancers and tappers and a lively chorus of students, passengers and villagers. The tappers, along with Frederick and The Monster performed a lively and skilful rendition of "Putting On The Ritz".

Throughout, the dance routines were varied and impeccably executed with some great chorus numbers and imaginative choreography by Nikki Mundell-Poole.

Musical Director, James Tovey conducted the band and supported the actors very well. Under his direction, the band created the melodies and provided backing to the cast, at just the right level and all the singing was extremely good. It was a pleasure to listen.

Well done to all the production team who were involved in so many ways, creating the backdrop to the actors on stage.

This was a really ambitious production and I must congratulate the Director Nikki Mundell-Poole for her vision and creativity and her ability to bring this musical to the stage.

Congratulations to everyone involved. The audience was really appreciative and I enjoyed the evening very much.

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