

Jack the Ripper
Witham Amateur Operatic Society
Witham Public Hall
April 28-May 3

Story of the 1880s is a bit of bawdy fun

JACK the Ripper is more music hall than musical. The story, such as it is, is incidental. The aim is to get big blousy songs full frontal blasting at the audience.

It is a frolic through the East End of London in 1888, the year the Ripper was active, with a series of big production numbers that allow the large cast to give their all. There are some solos and duets, principally from Keiley Hall, David Slater, Emma Loring and Stewart Adkins, who attack everything with gusto. And there are chances for others such as Elisabeth Batt, Phil Thompson, Simon Rothman, Tom Whelan and Richard Herring to step up to the plate.

David Bowles, Ron Howe and Matthew Wildie offer a Pythonesque I Love Dressing in Women's Clothes number, while Hilary Watling, Janet Hawkes, Donna Goddard and Sean Griffrths also have their moments on centre stage. It is that sort of evening, full of bounce and bawd, lashings of adult humour, much intentional over-acting and grand gesturing and a helping of Gor Blimeys thrown in.

The Sound of Music it isn't. That comes next. This was a bit of fun and froth, carried off with the company's usual aplomb under the first-time direction of Kerry King and musical director James Tovey.

Ron Fosker