

Crazy for You – WAOS, Witham

Guest Reviewer: Christine Davidson

For the Autumn production, WAOS chose the ever popular show ‘Crazy for You’. With all the great Gershwin songs, the almost full Tuesday night audience were in for a treat.

This is a wonderful, romantic musical where boy meets girl and falls in love. Bobby Childs the rich son of a banking family is hoping for an audition with Mr Zangler of Zangler Follies. He is doomed when auditioning he steps on Mr Zangler’s foot. Outside he meets his fiancée and mother, one that wants to finally marry him and one that wants him to go to Deadrock to foreclose on a rundown theatre. He makes his choice and decides on Deadrock where he meets Polly and the romance begins.

Matthew Scott as Bobby Child did well in this lead, starring role. He was confident on stage and sang well. His dancing was just a little too stiff, I would have loved him to have relaxed a little but as this is first night I’m sure he will ease more into the dancing as the show goes on.

Sophie Holmes as Polly Baker, his love interest, was superb and had a voice like honey. Her version of ‘Someone To Watch over me’ was simply beautiful and Sophie was as pretty as a picture. A truly lovely performance.

Stewart Atkins as Bela Zangler gave us a very comedic performance and delivered the humour effortlessly. His scene with Bobby as the impersonation of Bela was really well choreographed and timed to perfection during the excellent mirroring scene.

Maeve Borges as Irene Roth, Bobby’s sophisticated and demanding fiancée, had the spotlight with her song ‘Naughty Baby’ - giving us a sexy siren with legs to die for. A standout performance.

Lank Hawkins (Drury) the hotel and bar owner, gave us a very slow southern drawl and played the role in a smart and likeable fashion. Just would have liked a little more pace and energy from him.

Polly's father Everett Baker (Joe Geddis) was perfect for this role and the love of his daughter was there for all to see. You could just imagine sitting on his porch in a rocking chair looking out across Deadrock.

Lottie Childs (Tracey Hackett), Bobby's domineering mother was also able to show the caring side of her character and had stage presence each time she came on.

The English tourists Eugene and Patricia Fodor (Matthew Waldie and Carole Hart) are writing a guide book on the American West. This was a good pairing and their song 'Stiff Upper Lip' was very rousing.

The Follies Girls were well drilled and looked splendid in their costumes all made by Karla Brown. Singing and dancing all the show through they always had smiles on their faces and kept in character throughout. Tess (Karla Brown) is pursued by Zangler but gets the better of him and Patsy (Kirsty Lloyd) was the high pitched, squeaking voiced, dizzy blonde. Both gave good characterisation of their roles.

The Cowboys all did well and certainly had their work cut out from at the start, from not being able to dance but to finally all giving very credible performances. Standouts for me were Moose (Louis Bartlett) and Kieran Wingrove as Junior.

A nice ensemble filled the stage at various points giving them various roles to enhance the production.

The set was made by the crew and worked well with two standing revolves, one side the Zangler Follies and the other Deadrock. Back cloths of each scene indicated where they were. Lighting was fine but sound sometimes was a problem with a possible wireless mic having problems??

The orchestra was led by Musical Director Susannah Edom but at the very beginning, I'm afraid, drowned out what was being said by the cast, who also seem to gabble a bit, consequently it was hard to understand but slowly the music level did reduce so we could hear what was being said. Again I am sure that being first night this will be addressed as the run proceeds.

This was as usual a super show by WAOS and I'm sure that they will be getting full houses for the rest of the run. The appreciative audience could be heard humming the tunes as they went out. Congratulations to all.