

WITHAM - GUYS AND DOLLS - 25TH OCTOBER 1996
DRAFT REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 1997 BULLETIN

WITHAM A.O.S. - GUYS AND DOLLS
Public Hall, Witham

Guys and Dolls served Witham well as a good company show in this 75th Anniversary Year with this production. A very satisfying mix of well loved numbers and suitably way out characters, with able direction by Lee Threadgold, made for a good evenings' entertainment, with plenty of involvement for everyone.. There were some cracking ensemble pieces, bursting with energy (and colour in Havana), right from the opening through to the final curtain, and topped by a super 'Sit Down, Your Rocking.the Boat. Despite this, Act I did not seem to generate an overall vitality. Some excellent, over the top, characterisations, led by Michael Dunion as Nathan, and Pat McLeod as Adelaide, kept the comedy alive and well, and their 'Sue Me' was a joy. Good performances too came from Mick Hemstedt as a cool and likeable Sky Masterton, and from Nicholas Clough as an understanding Arvide. Liz Watson was a nice Sarah, gaining authority as the show progressed, but needed to demonstrate a wider range of emotions in the early scenes. Sets and costume were up to the usual good standard, and Brian Brown once again had a sure, and sympathetic hold on the orchestra and vocalists.

A thoroughly enjoyable evening, and nice to see you've maintained that 'all information' centre page spread in your programme.

Other Comments (for the Society only)

1. As above. a lot of good ensemble work. Whilst the opening might have been a touch too long it went a very long way to generate the atmosphere, well kept up in the numbers that followed.
2. The mission band came across well, though I was not sure about all their auditorium entrances, in the sense that some occurred during dialogue, which was lost to the audience because of the distraction of unexpected movement in the aisle. One other point on the band, or rather Arvide, who seemed to be in serious trouble with a uniform collar that did not appear to fit at all. A pity, since the rest of the uniforms looked OK.
3. I have thought a lot about this feeling I had of vitality lacking in ActI, and conclude that of all the situations and relationships which make up both the plot and the atmosphere, it was that between Sarah and Sky which wasn't delivering 100% of the goods. There did not, to me, seem to be the necessary spark and fire between them, and intensity of her own emotions, which must be there if the audience is to be carried along on the belief that this girl is actually being swept off her feet by Sky, having arrived at the mission with the one purpose of 'saving' people like Sky. This is the first big principal part that I have seen Liz play, and I congratulate her in making of it what she did, because it is certainly not the easiest, by any means. Certainly Sarah in Act II was a more understandable characterisation, and the relationship with Adelaide in 'Marry the Man Today' seemed just right.
4. Its always a pleasure to come to Witham, and this time was no exception. Its also great to see thing going so well with WOW, and I really do congratulate you with what you are achieving. I look forward to West Story in February with every wish for success.

John Warburton
November 1996