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NODA Representative District 8

13 April 2019

Any observation made by the reviewer can only be based on what they see at the performance in question. The reviewer may have received information in advance of the performance and it is inevitable that their assessment will be affected by that knowledge.

The N.O.D.A. Representative's intention is to give an objective critique of the overall production and in particular the performance viewed. It should be remembered that any review of this nature can only be objective as far as the techniques used during the performance observed. Any criticisms expressed may not have been valid at other performances, and are only made to encourage higher standards in Amateur Theatre.

It is hoped that the audience's appreciation of your efforts will have given everyone a lift and encouraged you to greater achievements in the future and that the observations made by the reviewer will prove helpful in improving future productions.

So to start with let's get all the cards on the table; full disclosure, I am always a little bit apprehensive about having to review a show that I have previously directed myself (albeit a youth version). I find that there is always an amount of "I wouldn't have done that?" or "why did they do that?" and knowing the plays/musicals so well, I am really aware if something has gone wrong or been missed. However, I am always interested to see how different societies view the same production.

First of all, how lucky are you guys to have Andrew Wright available to your society. A local boy made (very) good, Andrew's experience as a double Olivier Award nominee clearly shone through and was there on show in every scene. The use of furniture and scene setters was wonderfully minimalist. Relying completely on a few coffins; a few chairs; and the Addams gate, also having one backdrop for every scene gave a real stylish look to the show. This meant that there was no time wasted on scene changes, as they were all done seamlessly in front of the audience by the ancestors. Suddenly, there was a crowd of ancestors and when they moved there was a chair! Very clever and extremely effective. The opening scene, whilst the overture was playing, was incredibly good, the

Addams House was amazing and it looked great when the hands came out of it and it started spinning around – what a wonderful start to the show.

The sound and the lighting for this production was of an exceptionally high standard. There were no sound issues at all and the lighting looked stunning, especially impressive was the way you used very dark and sombre lighting, to give a gothic look, yet still allowed everything to be visible. The red moon was a particularly dramatic effect.

The orchestra, under the guidance of Lynne Merrifield were superb. The audience could hear every note and not once did the orchestra overpower the vocals. Perfect in every way. The choreography was under the control of Andrew Wright and Anna Gifford, the dancing was stunning and it was clear that every single member of the cast knew every single step. The dancers were completely in sync with each other and all the numbers were different and exciting. Also a lot of the routines made great use of hand movements, this looked effective but also, when there are a lot of people on the stage, meant that dance routines didn't look messy or cluttered. What a brilliant idea to have the chorus members on stage throughout the entire production, moving the scenery and even at times becoming part of the scenery, such as arms of chair etc... All the singing in this production was lovely and of a very high standard, you could see that everyone had worked so hard. It was also impressive how so many of the actors managed to sing in their American accents, not an easy task.

The make-up, costumes and wigs all worked together to produce a fully rounded professional look. All the main characters appeared exactly as you would expect and all the chorus members had their own individual characters, that all looked fantastic on their own but also worked well as an ensemble. A fabulous job by an incredibly talented group of people.

The acting in this production was completely top notch. All the main principles completely embodied their roles and were always in character. Matthew Maisey and Jess Russell, lead the principles as Gomez and Morticia and their onstage chemistry was undeniable. Matthew is always a pleasure to watch and he brought so much to his lead role here, showing the vulnerable side of Gomez but also bringing out all the humour in this role. Lydia Stobie-Owen and Dougal Bradwell, brought a lot of emotion and depth to their portrayal of Wednesday and Pugsley, they both also had exceptional singing voices and gave some very strong performances of a couple of the shows more iconic songs. Matt

Turner did a sterling job of wringing humour out of his role as Fester, without going over the top and chewing the scenery, his voice was spot on too. Judi Neale and Ross Barker were very funny as Grandma and Lurch and, again like Matt, found every drop of humour without overdoing it. Rounding out the principles were Dave Bonser, Elspeth Salmon and James Moore as The Beineke Family, these guys gelled so well that it was hard to imagine they were not really a dysfunctional family struggling to show that they are “normal”. James, especially, did a great job and his harmonies with Lydia were beautifully sung. I wouldn't normally mention every principle in a review but, it was impossible to isolate a few cast members for individual praise when you all worked together so well, everyone was fantastic and that included the chorus members too! The chorus were on stage for practically the whole production, and yet always seemed to have a purpose and it meant there was always something to watch. All the ancestors were in character for every second they were on stage and what different characters too, which they also managed to portray with ease.

At the beginning of this review, I stated that I was concerned about watching a production I have directed, as I would be worried about unfairly comparing it to my own. To be honest this wasn't a problem as, even though I felt that we had done a good job, this production completely blew mine out of the water. This was an immense achievement that would not have looked out of place on the West End Stage. As well as directing, I have also seen this show before and the innovative way you used the chorus members was just something else, outstanding and phenomenal are words overused but not so here. Every now and then a company does that one production where everything just works and comes together perfectly, this was it, super singing; cracking choreography; amazing acting and superb scene setting. This will be that production that people of Street will keep talking to you about and I feel very sorry for anyone who missed it. Well done to you all and thank you so much for inviting me.