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Bexhill Light Operatic & Dramatic Society

The Addams Family

Friday 26th October 2018

The Izzard Theatre Bexhill

Director: Henri Hayler

Choreographer: Sophia Lefevre

Musical Director: Judy Ann Gilham

Click, click! With no preconceived ideas I came to the Izzard Theatre for the very first time and had the pleasure of seeing an appropriately timed spooky cartoon based, relatively new musical, with absolutely no knowledge of either the storyline or the music. What an exhilarating experience! Amazing characters created from a book by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice, music and lyrics by Andrew Lippa.

Under the imaginative direction of Henri Hayler, choreography created by Sophia Lefevre and musical direction under Judy Ann Gilham, her nine-piece band tucked out of sight, using a screen, the BLODS team produced a spectacular interpretation. A particularly well designed colourful A4 programme with a good mix of interesting detail including a good NODA mention, together with excellent publicity running up to the performances, was achieved by the team.

The macabre setting with dry ice effects reveals the Addams family visiting the graveyard for their annual gathering of the Ancestors – living, dead and undecided! Tall elegant Abigail Doherty's adept singing- notable 'Just Around the Corner' and natural dancing performance is the aloof mother Morticia. Father, Gomez – Liam Rowley maintaining his Latin accent throughout, hardly off stage, played his part with much energy and this his first singing, acting and dancing role! Daughter Wednesday's fallen in love with a 'normal' Lucas Beineke who are secretly engaged. It's decided he and his parents be invited to dinner. Little brother Pugsley, cheekily and most confidently played by Maya Godlonton-White, is upset that his sister will leave and there will be no more tortures for him! He steals a potion from a great character geriatric Grandma played so well by Anne Hutchings returning to the stage after quite a break. There's Uncle Fester comically but poignantly portrayed by Kitson Wellard, the narrator with a twinkle - who falls in love with Moon and eventually flies off with a rocket strapped to his back. Torpid Lurch, the family grunting retainer played so well by tall Chris Eyre surprises us towards the end by singing! Talented Chris Packham as Lucas charmed us. Lucas's parents Mal and Alice are splendidly characterised by Will Spears and Jo Flay, who nervously arrive for drinks and dinner and play 'The full disclosure Game' when everyone will tell a secret! Alice reveals to Morticia her marriage is passionless, Gomez and Morticia explain they tango every night. Total confusion reigns, Alice mistakenly drinks the truth potion. Wednesday declares she is marrying Lucas – he agrees, the Ancestors create a sudden

storm forcing the Beinekes to stay the night. After further incredible action like Lucas letting Wednesday blindfolded shoot an apple with her crossbow off his head, there's a monster under Pugsley's rack bed, Morticia is upset about being lied to, threatening to leave, Uncle Fester plays his uke and sings a passionate song to the mesmerising full Moon, Gomez promises to take his wife to Paris.... Of course, everything comes right in the end and true love triumphs.

Catchy musical numbers throughout come thick and fast, with plenty of comedy and emotion too – one in particular came from Liam Rowley with 'Happy Sad' singing with his growing-up daughter Wednesday, who is a spikily determined young lady – with a most polished performance coming from Robyn Nash showing her immense versatility. The dance routines throughout were creative with samples of many genres, all very slick from both principals, ensemble and the little ones too.

The open stage revealed the family enshrouded tomb within the graveyard – stone, iron railings, coffins, skeletons and atmospheric fog effects. The projections of the various locations with suitably creepy additions, were beautifully presented by Callum Pelling together with great sound effects, together with William Brann creating the mood lighting. The sound from the unseen orchestra was just right. Stage crew worked efficiently throughout with the banquet dinner setting particularly well executed. Props of quality were provided by the backstage crew which included a working lever and chains, huge cigars, candles, spiders, hooks, swords, a walking bear and more!

To describe the costumes, make-up and hair styling is quite difficult. Black with red trim theme running through stunning, contrasting with the floating whites/silvers of the ancestors, terrific. Oh, what enormous fun you must have had with such script and lyrics, resulting in an excellent job from all involved. A perfect choice for the season, a new venue and another truly successful production for BLODS.

Thank you for the privilege.

A precis of this Review will be posted on the NODA website shortly

Anne Lawson
Regional Representative
NODA SE District 3

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH **Tel** 01733 374 790 **Fax** 01733 237 286 **Email** info@noda.org.uk **Web**
www.noda.org.uk

Twitter @NODAtweets **Facebook** NationalOperaticDramaticAssociation

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