



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Bexhill Light Operatic & Dramatic Society
The Wedding Singer
Friday 1st November 2019
The Izzard Theatre Bexhill
Director: Lee Lyons Asst Director: Henri Hayler
Choreographer: Hollie Saunters
Musical Director: Judy Gilham

Another first for me from Bexhill – an upbeat musical comedy based on the classic 1997 film the book written by Tim Herlihy and Chad Beguelin with music by Matthew Sklar. Picture yourself in the USA at any wedding when you meet an array of characters and ages, miss-matches, include a dedicated wedding entertainment band, a broken heart, misunderstanding and a happy ending finale, add a few tears together with much humour and you’ve got a great show. Robbie Hart is our hero, a wedding singer, residing with his Grandma in Ridgefield New Jersey. During the warm-up at a wedding gig he announces that the very next day he’s to marry fiancée Linda. Meanwhile, he meets Julia Sullivan, a waitress who’s dying to be married and helps him to write a corny love song and makes him promise to sing at her wedding. However, on the wedding day Linda dumps Robbie by note! Meanwhile Wall Street Boyfriend Glen Guglia pops the question to Julia, Robbie now much depressed and angry is being persuaded to get out of the ‘dumpster’ and to change his gigs to Bar Mitzvah events rather than weddings. Julia’s cousin fun loving Holly suggests Julia practice her wedding kissing technique which she tries out with Robbie and is taken by surprise! Later at a nightclub in NY with Sammy and George, Robbie and Holly realises Glen is a cheat and Julie is just marrying for his money and security. To impress, Robbie goes to Wall Street to apply for a job. Holly and Sammy get together after she initially giving him the cold shoulder. Still unable to make Julia change her mind she tries her wedding frock on and still having Glen doubts, she imagines being Robbie’s wife. At Glen’s bachelor party a fight ensues Robbie gets knocked out and Glen fires him. Arriving back home at his Granny’s drunk, he finds Linda the psycho in his bed! Next day Julia arrives to explain how she feels to be confronted by Linda, prompting her to elope to Las Vegas with the cheating Glen. Robbie finds this out from Holly at Grandma’s 50th Anniversary do. Robbie flies off and with the help of a group of impersonators – Tina Turner, Donald Trump, Madonna and others crash the Vegas wedding. Glen is outraged, the impersonators beat him up, Robbie proposes to Julia and she accepts only if he will sing at her wedding. The answer is yes, and the finale is their wedding.

With stage space limitation, the simplified staging was appropriate with the live band hidden centrally behind a gauze and black partitioning blacks either wide a very useful step tower giving height interest – well managed may I say, and a small central plinth for the players plus keyboard. Additions of guest tables and chairs decorated with themed colours, clothes,

balloons etc. plus the wedding tiered cakes creating the reception scenes – very good props. Robbie’s room was set with bed and back wall decor and was manoeuvred pretty well, although sometimes in ‘light’. I think side and backstage are quite tight, so well done to the cast for their swift entrances and exits. The location scenes were well back-projected by ‘Fuzzy Duck Creative’ providing a most professional appearance. The technical side was well managed with interesting lighting design and effects. The sound was good with the first-class band but at times, for my ear, rather too loud. The costume design by Sam Lewis and Sophia Lefevre created some great characters, but may I suggest backs of costumes are as important as fronts! Hairdo’s were great and such fun and those wigs perfect.

Good publicity and programme design – something a little different.

The key hero was Robbie Hart and Chris Packham most certainly created a perfect loveable cheeky character in both acting and singing. His two band members were Boy George lookalike played by Leigh Doherty really camp and first timer Damon Miller plus his musical tie around his head the guitarist Sammy. Daisy Estall paired with Robbie perfectly, and gave a polished performance and supported by her mates Holly, Abigaile Doherty and Angie performed by Claire Hughes. The villain of the piece Glen was smoothly performed by Charlie Abrahams. Leather clad Linda the ‘psycho’ was sexily played by Bobbi Sutton and the real character of the show must be Jessica Wellard’s wonderful groovy Granny Rosie. Under the guidance of Judy Gilham, the solos, duets and chorus singing were varied in style and well put over. The ‘ah’ factor little ones were delightful. A real family affair. There were many named cameo characters in this production and each was interpreted well both in persona and costume. With the dedicated, creative production team this was a fun, pleasantly surprising experience.

A precis 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

Registered CIO charity number 1171216 Registered company number 241572 Registered in England and Wales at the above address.

Patrons: The Lord Lloyd Webber and Connie Fisher