

Group: CODY Musical Theatre Company
Show: Kinky Boots
Venue: Princes Hall Theatre, Aldershot
Date: 29 September 2022
Director: Sue Canfield
Musical Director: Zoe Hardy
Choreographer: Graham McCarron-Wright



KINKY BOOTS is a musical blockbuster and based on the 2005 film of the same name and – as a musical – it opened in London and the Broadway version followed. The book is by Harvey Fierstein and the music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper. It's an uplifting show, based on a true story when drag queen, Lola, saves an ailing Northampton shoe factory that Charlie, has reluctantly inherited on his father's death. His fiancée sees their future elsewhere. While Lola is undoubtedly the lynchpin of the show the entire cast also have a chance to shine and this is a fine ensemble piece.

THE PROGRAMME: The glossy A4 programme gave clear information about the production team, cast and orchestra with a nice selection of lively photos (with biogs of the cast) and rehearsals. While the programme was well designed, written and very interesting, some of the text in the fonts (white on black/red) was not easy to read, especially in dim theatre lighting. The programme also contained 'The Real Story of Kinky Boots' as well as information about the group and how to join, half a page about NODA, a selection of productions by other groups and up and coming CODY productions.

SCENERY/SET/PROPERTIES: The various scenes: the factory (multi level), night club, street and Charlie and Nicola's flat were excellent. The scene changes were smooth and efficient. The set dressings were all appropriate and the props were excellent and well used by the cast.

COSTUMES: The costumes were fantastic, ranging from Lola and the Angel's performance outfits to the every day clothes worn by the factory workers. There were many changes of clothes (especially The Angels) and the Kinky boots themselves were impressive and deserve their own mention. They didn't steal the show but nearly did, especially towards the finale.

LIGHTING & SOUND: The lighting was effective and imaginative throughout with dazzling very colourful lighting emphasising the night club scenes. The quality of the singing was outstanding and the live orchestra provided fine support to the vocalists. The sound overall was excellent, however, to me, on occasion it seemed too loud and therefore some clarity was lost.

THE PRODUCTION: The outstanding talent of the cast resounded throughout this excellent production. The expertise of the director and choreographer was evident as they were able to “drill their troops” to the highest level. The cast exhibited great comic ability as well as transforming from joy to sadness when needed. There were some exceptionally funny moments but also some memorable solos: ‘The History of the Wrong Guys’ by Alice Ryland as Lauren and Devin Moller, as Lola, singing ‘Hold me in your heart. Dale Barrell as Charlie and Devin Moller as Lola showed compassion and understanding to one another as men who had both had complicated relationships with their fathers.

There was much to enjoy in this show: Devin’s performance as Lola was bold and brassy with big hair and witty quips and there was humour bubbling throughout. If there is energy on the stage (and there was, in abundance, in this instance) it filtered out to the audience. The choreography by Graham McCarron-Wright was inventive and the cast were in time with the band and one another and with direction by the experienced Sue Canfield, this production was a great credit to CODY. There was a standing ovation on the night I attended and the entire audience left the theatre absolutely buzzing.

CHRIS HORTON
DISTRICT 14 REPRESENTATIVE
South East Region, NODA.

Chris.horton@noda.org.uk
www.noda.org.uk

Tel: 01256 882426
Mo: 07769 568904