

Spring 2013 - 'The Reunion'

Winner of the NODA President's Cup 2013

A truly momentous week in the history of the Group came to an end with the final production of our spring show, 'The Reunion'. Opening Night was greeted with loud applause and whoops of delight by our enthusiastic inaugural audience, matching the enjoyment of the entire cast for this lively and innovative show. Any concerns carried over from the "mild panic" stage of rehearsals were quickly forgotten as we soon got in the swing of things, driven along by the dynamic sound of our band of musicians. By the time of the final bows everyone was on a high, as were all those watching! The level then just built and built with each successive evening, as we dispelled those first night nerves and gave a series of sparkling performances to highly-appreciative audiences. Last Night came round much too soon, but all good things must come to an end. Our only consolation was knowing that we'd been involved in something really special.

All who came to see the show seemed to think so too, judging by the feedback we've had. We even got a write-up in "Sardines" magazine (which, despite its name, is actually professionally-produced magazine for amateur theatre).

Check it out by clicking [here](#) - Review.

There had been great enthusiasm for the show right from the beginning, so the whole Society was looking forward to bringing this new production to the stage. Each Act was run and revised several times after we transferred to our performance venue (Beccles Public Hall), with principals and ensemble desperately trying to remember what the director and choreographer had said we should be doing - easier said than done! The "costume call" found the cast with genuine 1970's outfits rescued from dark recesses at the back of wardrobes and entertaining us with reminiscences of their schooldays - slightly "edited", no doubt! We got to hear the band for the first time during our Technical Rehearsal on the Sunday, and they sounded great! Dress rehearsal on Monday then brought everything together and convinced us that we had a really great show which was guaranteed to entertain our audiences throughout the week.

So - what was it all about? Well, while we always aim to be "ahead of the curve" as far as innovative musical theatre productions go, we've never staged a World Premiere before! Until now, that is.

'The Reunion' is a story of unrequited love, honour & sacrifice, recollection & reminiscence, betrayal & forgiveness, played out against the backdrop of a school reunion - what more could you want? A laugh-out-loud script and music to die for, that's what, and 'The Reunion' has it all. Sweeping ballads, up-tempo dance numbers and comedy interludes combine in the very best tradition of the British Musical to produce truly outstanding entertainment.

The well-attended Preview Evening gave our Musical Director Ian Newton and Stage Director Ian Cook (who also just happen to be the co-writers of the show!) the opportunity to tell us more about the plot, the characters and the music. The twists & turns of the plot and the great variety of musical styles held everyone spellbound, with well-deserved applause greeting the end of each number. The next event was the Read-Through, when we were by turns laughing out loud and reaching for the box of tissues as we each took the part of the various characters as their lives interwove to the dramatic conclusion. We then had a few introductory rehearsals, so the audition candidates could find out exactly what they were letting themselves in for (!), before launching into the Principals' Auditions. These produced some fine performances, both musically and for the spoken word, making the task of the audition panel as difficult as ever. However, after long deliberation and a certain amount of shuffling the pack, they were able to cast every part but one. This role proved rather problematic though, as we just couldn't find a Tom from those who put themselves forward. While not an ideal solution, our Stage Director and writer, Ian Cook, was eventually persuaded to valiantly step into the breach himself (well - at least he should have some idea of what the part involves!), with Jane Zarins being drafted in as Assistant Director to tell Tom when he's not doing it as the writers intended! Thanks to Jane for agreeing to do this. Those heady days of the end-of-term disco were thus re-created by the following band of players:-

Tom Green - Ian Cook	Debbie James - Helen Roscoe	Harry Machin - Bob Sharman
Susan Pye - Sarah Cook - Clare Osborne	Dick Littleworth - Andy Osborne	Laura Smith
John Green - Tony Hardy Peter Simmen	Miss Jolly - Debbie Lambert	Mr Grey -
Mr Powell - Jason Lambert Headmistress - Jackie Kefford	Mrs James - Christine Mullord	
Caretaker - Mike Catling	Miss Davies - Sue Cushing	Priest - Stuart Lamb
Mr James - Philip Allum Barber - Kate Jackson	Malcolm Simmons - John Kingston	Steph
Bob Watson - Jeremy Watts Woman - Suzie Kingston	Gym Instructor - Ella Farrer	The Other
Waitress - Sophie Cannell	DJ - Tony Hardy	Policeman - David Whittle
Policewoman - Barbara Warren	School Teachers	
and Pupils - Steve Holmes, Cerys Roscoe, Ruth Gardener, Wendy Marshall		

And after that the rest was, as the saying goes, just history! (or at least history in the making).

When the records come to be written, we will be able to say "Ah yes - I was there!". Were you?