

Spring 2016 - 'The Best Man'

Nominated for Best Musical, NODA Eastern Region District 6, in 2016

After several months of hard-working but enjoyable rehearsals, we were delighted to welcome a near-capacity audience to the Opening Night of our spring show, 'The Best Man'. They greeted us with rapturous applause and genuine enjoyment, which was thoroughly deserved as the principals, ensemble & band rose magnificently to the occasion to set show week off to a really good start. Things built to a climax through the week, so by the time we closed on Saturday night a full-scale standing ovation greeted the final bows. Ticket sales were of near-record proportions, so this was definitely one of our best shows ever - hope you didn't miss it!

Don't take our word for it though - read the NODA review, by clicking [here](#).

Things had been looking good for a couple of weeks, and once everyone had got used to the actual stage space they had available (with a few tweaks here and there!) it was all systems go. Once the band joined us we really began to fly, and further encouragement came from the Technical and Dress Rehearsals, which went very well. After such a great beginning the entire cast were really looking forward to the rest of the week ahead of them.

But what was it all about? The story is that after much deliberation we announced last autumn that our show for spring 2016 would be another WORLD PREMIERE. Hot on the heels of the NODA President's Cup winning 'The Reunion', our dynamic duo, Ian Cook & Ian Newton, came up with a brand-new production for us. Set in London's East End in the summer of 1981, the show is a musical comedy telling the tale of Cathy Price, a hairdresser and lover of romantic fiction, who is searching for Dagenham's answer to Mr.Darcy. She thinks she has found him in her new boyfriend Tony Wickham but Tony is not all he appears to be. Cathy's long time next-door neighbour and childhood friend, Danny Tilney, has secretly been in love with Cathy for as long as he can remember but has never dared tell her. Tony asks Danny to be his best man but on the night before the wedding Danny discovers the real reason why Tony is so keen to marry. Should Danny speak out and risk all for love?

The Preview Evening on Monday 2nd November gave the directors an opportunity to tell us about the show, which featured all new songs and, like 'The Reunion', is set for a large ensemble cast with a variety of speaking and singing roles for all ages. We then went through the entire libretto (that's the words!) and most of the songs at the Read-Through on the Wednesday, when some amazing characterisations emerged - some of which even the writers hadn't thought of! Next came the audition process, with audition rehearsals on 9th & 11th November before we moved to Beccles Public Hall for the formal principals' auditions on 16th & 18th November.

These gave the Audition Panel the almost impossible task of separating one brilliant performance from another for almost every role. Each year there are candidates who really rise to the occasion and give a show-stopping audition, and this year was no exception. Many alternative castings would have been possible, so the Panel offered their heart-felt congratulations to everyone who took part - they were all "winners". However, decisions had to be made and so the dreaded 'phone calls were soon undertaken! Thankfully, everyone accepted the part offered and so those taking us back to the heady days of Charles & Di were:-

Cathy Price - Tom Holt	Sophie Cannell	Danny Tilney -	Stephen Brown	Tony Wickham -
Sharon Crawford - Helen Roscoe	Emily Holt	Lisa Smith -	Bethan Roscoe	Vi Price -
Ron Wickham - Gary Watson	Paul Ashby	Mr. Temple -	Bob Sharman	Rev. Collins -
Pat Sharp - Mike Catling	Debbie Lambert	Gran -	Christine Mullord	Albert Sharp -
Maitre d' - Mayhew -	Peter Simmen Ruth Lewis-Smith	Charlie Thomas -	Jerry Garcia	Sandra
Curly -	Lee Peck	Slim -	Jeremy Watts	Auntie Margaret - Sarah Cook
Miss Coombs - Jason Lambert	Daisy Tyrell-Kent	BBC Reporter -	Steve Holmes	Policeman -
Royal Trumpeter - Sam Fennelly	James Horsley	Posh Girl 1 -	Jayne Andrew	Posh Girl 2 -
Trevor - Howlett	John Hammond	Fitter 1 -	Baden Aldridge	Fitter 2 - Sam
Assistant 1 - Helen Watson	Cerys Roscoe	Assistant 2 -	Megan Gallagher	Shopper 1 -
Shopper 2 -	Wendy Marshall	Shopper 3 -	Lorraine George	

Rehearsals got fully under way early in the New Year, when we set about learning the music and setting the scenes for a couple of months. Everyone greatly enjoyed themselves as they brought a new show to life, and the characterisations really began to develop well as the weeks went on. Indeed, you didn't have to listen too hard to realise that even some of the harmonies were coming through on occasion! It would have been tempting fate to say we didn't want to peak too soon, but it was certainly be a luxury to be able to have several weeks of run-throughs in order to really polish the moves. Show week was upon us all too soon however, and it turned out to be a fantastic week for cast and audiences alike!