

# **SURREY MIRROR**

## **1995 *Anything Goes***

### ***A tapping success***

“Anything Goes” was first performed on the New York stage in 1934 and an extensively revised version presented in the West End in the late 1980’s. The East Surrey Operatic Society staged the revised working last week at The Harlequin in Redhill to ‘sold out’ notices and generally maintained the all-round standard of production and performance we have come to expect from this enterprising company.

The story itself is fairly and flimsy, as perhaps you’d expect from the pen of P.G. Wodehouse and revolves around a collection of rather eccentric and diverse characters aboard a cruise ship bound for England. All have their reasons for being on board and all are cunningly contrived to be interlinked and lead to a happy ending by the end of the evening. The various convolutions of the plot are almost incidental to the show’s success, as they merely provide a marvellous opportunity for a large (over 50) hardworking and enthusiastic cast to present a series of show stopping numbers, memorable tunes and witty lyrics from the pen of one of the masters of the musical stage – Cole Porter. This they did to tremendous effect, filling the large Harlequin stage with colour, music and sound and some highly imaginative dance routines by choreographer Nikki Owen.

Such memorable numbers as ‘I Get A Kick Out Of You’, ‘Blow Gabriel Blow’ and, of course, ‘Anything Goes’ (which contained some terrific tap-dancing worthy of the West End stage) were performed with tremendous gusto and enthusiasm by the principals but more importantly the chorus who, as ever, were a vital element to the show’s success.

The young and highly talented orchestra, under Angela Barker, were sensational (who no mention in the programme?) and really added impetus to the whole show.

The main protagonist of the show was Reno Sweeney, a former professional evangelist turned nightclub singer with shady underworld connections. The success to some degree of “Anything Goes” depends on the performance of this character and Kay Simmonds in this role did not disappoint.

Philip Felstead’s Moonface Martin was a wonderful comic creation.

**Chris Butler**