

SURREY MIRROR

1994 *Hello Dolly!*

Great evening out!

Any play which has been played on Broadway and the West End, been a Hollywood classic and includes showstopper songs such as “Put on your Sunday Clothes” and , of course, “Hello Dolly” is bound to go down well. It certainly did when East Surrey Operatic gave people an extremely professional production of *Hello Dolly!* at The Harlequin Theatre last week.

Throughout the show we see Dolly, well portrayed by Pat Felstead, relentlessly hound Horace Vandergelder, equally well played by Andrew Glass, into marriage. Vandergelder owns a store in Yonkers, New York. His two innocent clerks, Cornelius and Barnaby, decide that it about time that they found themselves a woman. A trip to New York finds them in the company of Mrs Molloy, played suitably well by Michelle Luck, who was to marry Vandergelder but falls instantly in love with Cornelius., played with the right amount of innocence required by Terry Foster. Barnaby falls in love with Minnie. James Gautry’s lively performance as Barnaby reminded me of w young Tommy Steele and he is potentially as talented. The delightful Emma Swift gave one of the best performances of the evening as Minnie Fay. Added to all of this are the matchmaking efforts of Dolly to get Vandergelder’s niece, played by Fiona Thompson, to marry as unknown artist, Ambrose Kemper, played confidently by Matthew Cull.

There was much to praise about this show. I loved the restaurant scene stolen by Rudolph and his army of waiters and waitresses. Rudolph, immaculately performed by Phil Felstead, was an example of comedy perfection. We were treated to some slick choreography under the skilful direction of Nikki Owen.

All technical departments backstage, including the costume department, should be congratulated. The orchestra was under the direction of Susan Rowlinson. Full marks to Tony Young for directing his team so well and giving the sudence a terrific evening.

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