

# Surrey Mirror

## Review

### ***Musical Twist - A Tale of Two Companies***

**The Opera Club of Reigate and Redhill and East Surrey Operatic Society at The Harlequin Theatre, Redhill**

**Tuesday, April 14, 2009**

The Opera Club of Reigate and Redhill and East Surrey Operatic Society came together for the first time (other than for charitable events) to present a concert featuring a small selection of music from shows they have performed over the years, finishing with a peep into the future. They chose a well balanced selection which provided for a most enjoyable evening's entertainment for a large and enthusiastic audience.

The orchestra, under the baton of musical director Angela Barker, complimented the singing perfectly, seamlessly moving from one song to another.

The staging, necessarily, was simple, allowing the evening to flow with only small changes of costume to suggest the different collection of songs. However, I would have liked a little more "camouflaging" of the vast Harlequin stage during the smaller more intimate numbers - it seemed very bare at times. Perhaps some division of the stage using neutral backdrops/curtains or the more subtle use of lighting may have provided a solution.

However, these are minor criticisms and certainly did not detract greatly from a show which moved along smoothly and professionally with some extremely effective use of the large chorus in choreographic terms by the directors, Paul Longhurst and Vanessa Chambers, who are to be congratulated.

The soloists and chorus were uniformly excellent. However, I would like to mention certain memorable moments for me. These were Elizabeth Powell's Laughing Song from *Die Fledermaus*, the men's Tiller Girls routine from *The Merry Widow*, the belting *Oklahoma!* finale to Act I led by Kevin Stuart, the youthful enthusiasm of the junior chorus in "Bad Guys" from *Bugsy Malone* and the tremendous finale medley from *Les Miserables* featuring some terrific chorus work and fine solo performances from, among others, Sally Hatton, Elanor Bond (junior member), Fiona Thompson, Mark Nicholson, John Rapley, Kevin Stuart and Chris Whitebread.

The evening concluded with a rousing version of "Thank You Very Much" from the musical *Scrooge* for which both societies will be combining again to present in November. Judging by this evening's performance it will be one not to be missed.

**Reviewed by Chris Butler**