



Home

REVIEWS & PREVIEWS

Wednesday, 29-Aug-07

Listings Search

Today's Shows

About the Festivals

Festivals Email

Reviews & Previews

City Guide

News

Photo Weblog

FAQs & Links

Most Viewed Shows

 Optical Identity

 Amazing Rare Things: The Art of Natural History in the Age of Discovery

 Barrie: A Life in Stories

 Old Town Literary Pub Crawl

 Beyond Appearances: Painting and Picturing in Scottish Modern and Contemporary Art


SEARCH

>>

- minimum star rating -

GO

Spend, Spend, Spend *****

Evening News
Thu 16 Aug 2007GROUP EFFORT:
Quality runs through from soloists to chorus

printer friendly

email article

Telling of pools winner's tale is right on the money

THOM DIBDIN

Spend, Spend, Spend ****

St Oswald's Hall, Montpelier Park

STRONG performances and excellent staging ensure that Tempo Musical Production's version of the story of pools winner Viv Nicholson fairly crackles along - and carries its audience with it all the way.

Viv was the woman who famously said she would "spend, spend, spend" when her miner husband won £152,319 on the pools in 1961 with eight score draws. So she did - and it didn't take all that long to spend it, either.

Starting from the 1990s, with Norma Kinnear as Viv running a beauty salon in her home town of Castleford, the production soon slips easily back to her youth, with the old Viv looking on and commenting from the side while the role of young Viv is taken by Gabrielle Pavone.

It was a life dominated by Viv's violent father, poverty and king coal. The production brings all these elements nicely into focus. A strong and quite brutal performance from Dougie Arbuckle as her father broods constantly in the background, while excellent use of video and still projections set the scene.

The real success here, however, is in ensuring that the scale of the eventual win is not diminished. The sum might seem small now, but it was equivalent to over £5 million today and all the more newsworthy in a time when wartime rationing was still a recent memory and instant lottery winners a rarity.

If poverty was never far away, Pavone ensures that the young Viv is a lively and earthy character. Having been forced to marry the father of her first child, she soon had her eye on Keith, the man next door, with whom she ran away, got married and had several children.

Colin Cairncross steps strongly out of the chorus of miners and workers to play Keith. He builds up a great sense of a man who, without being downtrodden, plays second fiddle to his wife and is there to satisfy her carnal appetites.

If the company's three co-directors, together with musical director Simon Hanson, succeed in creating the feeling of grinding poverty from which Viv emerges, the change in pace and atmosphere when she goes to London to pick up her winnings is a revelation.

Where there had been grim tones to the look of the piece and an often harsh edge to the singing, all of sudden the costumes, music and performances combine to create a truly show-stopping version of the title number.

The subsequent changes in Viv and Keith's circumstances are tackled with an equal attention to detail.

How their friends react to them, not being accepted in their new, upper-middle class estate but holding drunken, orgiastic parties at any rate and their drunken trip to America all call for - and receive - great depth in the performances from Pavone and Cairncross.

In some ways, the quality which runs right through the show, from soloists to chorus and band, is its undoing: faults you might not notice in a less slick production are made obvious. But this is a great night out by any standard you care to set.

Run ends Saturday

Delivery formats for "Reviews & Previews"

[more info]

- [XML](#) RSS feed
- [JS](#) JavaScript feed
- [Add to my email](#)

Festival 2007

- Showcasing Bavarians' best (29-Aug-07)
- Festival finale set for the big screen (29-Aug-07)
- Unbalanced vocal parts leave room to improve (29-Aug-07)
- Charmless cod rock opera fails to deliver ideas (28-Aug-07)
- Variety makes for outstanding performance (28-Aug-07)

[More](#)

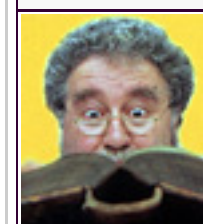
BRIEF ENCOUNTER



Every day we send two performers with something in common out on a date

[listen here >>](#)

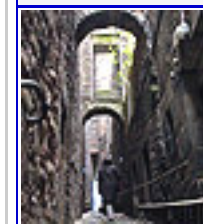
TRACING TIPS



Expert help to lead you safely through the pitfalls of hunting for your ancestors

heritage.scotsman.com

VIDEO ON DEMAND



Take a tour of Edinburgh's narrow closes: the first video podcast at scotsman.com

heritage.scotsman.com