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Reviews



Theatre Review: West Side Story at The Victoria Rooms

Thursday 25th March 2010

This is a Crackerjack review of West Side Story. Do you agree? [Rate and review this event.](#)

Crackerjack rating: 7 / 10.

Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's musical reworking of the Romeo and Juliet story sets the action in 1950's New York and the conflict between native born whites the Jets and the newly arrived Puerto Ricans, the Sharks.

The clash between these groups opens up wonderful opportunities for the choreographer to exploit and Bernstein's brilliant score gives the singers an equal opportunity to show off their talent.

Musical Director Tim Reader set the tone for this production establishing a strong musical presence in the overture with his twenty three strong Orchestra. There was an intensity about their playing which rubbed off on Director Barry Wiles production as a whole.

This is of course a serious tale of star crossed lovers but if you become too intense in the playing you can't enjoy the pleasure of performing the wonderful music and drama on offer, and there were times when some of the characters were too intensely played to bring out their full flavour.

When the company did let themselves go, as when led by the vivacious Natasha Green's Anita in 'America' and Jake Chew as 'Action' in the comedy number 'Gee, Officer Krupke' the stage really did become alive. Both numbers helped considerably by Lizzy Westney's lively choreography.

The Romeo and Juliet figures Tony and Maria who are at the heart of the tragic love story carry a tremendous responsibility. Although neither is vastly experienced Jon Hayes who played Tony and Ruth Harris who shares the role of Maria with Samantha Boardman brought a lovely tenderness and honesty to their portrayals.

Strong contributions came from Mathew Mead in the role of Bernardo, the leader of the 'Sharks' and Ian Brooks as his opposite number in the 'Jets' Riff.

If the company will relax and enjoy themselves a little more this is a production that will grow better and better at each performance.

Gerry Parker

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