

REVIEW

by Bill Pritchard

BRAVO is not a word heard in the modern theatre, where approval is more commonly shown these days by animalistic whoops and yells, but Burton Operatic Society deserve a chorus of bravos.

Their latest production — *Jekyll & Hyde, The Musical* — has had a difficult journey to the stage in this, the company's diamond jubilee year.

As chairman Angela Wynne remarks in her programme notes, there had been cause for concern among the group due to slow ticket sales.

This, they believed to be down to the subject matter and the relative newness of the piece.

Those concerns may still exist but the cast gave no sign of them on opening night at de Ferrers Harehedge Lane campus.

The principals, Karen Hambleton, Andy Last and Sharon Plummer, as respectively Lucy Harris, Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde and Emma Carew, gave sterling performances that contained many highs — among them Hambleton leading the ensemble in a sexually-charged *Bring on The Men*, Plummer shone in her *Take Me As I Am* duet with Last and Last himself giving, for me the highlight of the show, a powerfully outstanding performance with *This is the Moment*.

The show is very challenging musically but the entire cast seemed to glide through with ease.

One of the most difficult scenes, the confrontation between Hyde and Dr Jekyll, was well played by Last alone on the stage.

You may feel that this show is not your cup of tea but you could be surprised. The standard of performance is high and the orchestra drives the show to its climax.

As an aside, Wynne as Lady Beaconsfield has a stare that would turn blood to water.

All in all an entertaining yet thought provoking night of drama.

Burton Op has taken on the challenge of pushing the envelope and bringing something different to the de Ferrers stage — we should take up that challenge and go along and support them.

To return to my opening, despite the difficulties Burton Operatic Society fully deserve your bravos too.

So get along to de Ferrers and catch one of the remaining performances every night from 7.30pm and a matinee on Saturday at 2.30pm. Tickets are available by calling Hazel Andrews on 01283 541552.

Feel free to whoop as well.

JEKYLL & HYDE, THE MUSICAL

By Burton Operatic Society, at de Ferrers Academy



ABOUT FACE . . . the cast of *Jekyll & Hyde, The Musical*, by Burton Operatic Society, includes (back) Angela Wynne as Lady Beaconsfield, Lee Smith as Utterson, Sharon Plummer as Emma, (front) Karen Hambleton as Lucy, and Andy Last as Dr Jekyll