

THE METHWOLD THEATRE CLUB  
Grand Charity Victorian Music Hall

DIRECTOR  
Uncredited

MUSICAL DIRECTOR  
David Thomas

VENUE  
St Georges Hall Complex, Methwold

DATE  
Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016

I would normally start a review of this type by saying “This is the type of show that no one does any more” although since I put one on myself on Thursday, saw this one on Friday and did another one on Saturday .... that would seem to be untrue. The charity revue is definitely making a comeback, so much so, that NODA are considering introducing a separate category in the awards system just for musical revue shows. On this particular night it was The Methwold Theatre Company leading the great and the good from the area in a Grand Charity Victorian Music Hall. MTC are brand new members to NODA so, in a desperate attempt to ingratiate myself with them, I dressed in my finest late Victorian outfit. I was enormously relieved as I took my seat in the delightful St Georges Hall Complex that quite a few other people had done the same!

The charity in question was Bury St Edmunds Women’s Refuge and such a worthy cause underlined the importance of this type of production. The first thing to say was that the composition of the night’s entertainment was perfect. An eclectic mix of singing, comedy singing, novelty acts and the best melodrama I have ever seen! The set was simple but perfect with Stage Manager, Alan Camfield (Strong-man and Comedian) presiding. Sound (uncredited) and lighting (Terrence Shapland) did all they needed to do and the costumes were universally excellent! I loved the name boards for each act that were changed with some considerable style by MTC’s Rosemary Gibson.

Bob Hammond took the role of Master of Ceremony and delivered some very long words that I (and I suspect he) had no idea of the meanings. First half highlights were many, ranging from the sublime Miss Maddie Soan with the Oliver tear-jerker “As Long As He Needs Me” to the ridiculous Mr Phil Pearson with “Dipsticks Daring Deeds”. I would explain the latter to you but I just can’t find the words. Suffice to say I will be telling my therapist about it well into the New Year as he helps me come to terms with what I saw.

I really enjoyed Mr Harry Hilarious. A young comedy magician who looked to have aspirations towards the professional. His skill as a conjurer and the way he worked an audience suggested he had a pretty good shot. I thought Lady Hamilton’s Concert Party had stolen the first half with a superb all-female trio performing music and risqué comedy but they were frankly trumped by the side splitting Melodrama “The Purposeful Protestation of Pauline Protheroe” which had me crying with laughter!

The tea and mince pies available during the interval were impossible to resist leaving me relaxed as I returned to my seat for the second instalment. Another perfect balance of all things Music Hall with Lady Hamilton's Concert Party once again prominent. Miss Helen Fullerton returned to add "A Little of What You Fancy" to her "Oh Mr Porter" from Act One. A beautiful voice and a polished presentation. Other songstresses on show during the second half included Miss Krenulla Moorman with "Just a Song at Twilight" and the enchanting Charlotte Sometimes with "Where is Love". I have to say however that it really felt Victorian when Miss Sarah Appleton gave us "The Boy I Love Is Up in the Gallery", making me note that, for a revue show, the female singing was of an impressively high standard. The novelty act in Round Two was Mr Alan Camfield as Strong-Man and Comedian, and he did exactly what it said on the can. His personal fan club were in the house and he was extremely well received. The last act before the finale was Miss Fifi De La Pugh who looked suspiciously like Burtie Welland in drag. Miss De La Pugh gave us two songs which had the audience (myself included) singing along.

My compliments to MTC and whoever put all this together. As I mentioned at the beginning, I have just assembled singers, choirs and actors for a couple of Christmas Cabarets and it's a nightmare getting everyone together to rehearse or indeed even getting anyone to rehearse at all. Mr David Thomas did an excellent job on the keyboards and I simply had a brilliant time. To get away with this kind of show it has to be for charity. This one was, and it really was a great night of slightly surreal entertainment. I smiled all the way home and can't wait to see MTC in full flow next year!

Stephen P. E. Hayter.

(Regional Representative – NODA Eastern Region – Area 4 North)