

GREATER MANCHESTER DRAMA FEDERATION
Full Length PLAY FESTIVAL 2017/18

Society	MAODS
Title	Gypsy
Author	Music by J. Styne, Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Arthur Laurents.
Date & Time	Friday 27 th April, 2018
Venue	George Lawton Hall
Contact/host name	Claire Egerton
Contact on the night	John Buckley
Young actors in cast?	Yes
Licence available	No

Production highlights:

Good diction and audibility with excellent pace.

Quick, efficient and smooth scene changes.

The performances of all the cast but especially Holly Dewsnap, Laura Meredith-Hoyle and Samantha Bates.

To think about for the future:

Often, one or two principal performers held low eyelines with each other and the audience, thus sadly facial expression occasionally was lost.

The Production:

A class musical, which had received a recent treatment in London to critical acclaim.

The roles, singing and acting wise, are a challenge and skilled actresses are required to carry lengthy scenes of dialogue. For Louise, a transformation must be clearly shown from child to adult, striptease artist. A harridan of a mother must be played carefully as so easily this role could stray into a caricatured anger and dismissiveness of Louise.

The feel of the variety of the American vaudeville circuit acts and the struggles of auditionees must be clearly conveyed through set, dressing and costume to help provide the necessary context for the story to make sense.

Some richly detailed characters, afforded brief time within the structure of a musical, still need to make an impact on the audience and so affect Rose and Louise.

It has become a modern 'classic' with a strong story. Some have called it the '*King Lear*' of musicals. The authors provided some tunes which have become synonymous with '*show stoppers*' and become the hallmark of entertainment.

THE PRODUCTION

Adjudicator writes and identifies themes, challenges and requirements, etc., and details the requirements and elements of the production in which he was particularly interested.

TECHNICAL: Set and props

*A set which shows creativity and innovation and addresses the style of the production. Is well constructed.
Props which are in period, authentic in appearance and placed strategically e.g. furniture.*

As usual with this company the overall finish was excellent. The two flats downstage, one to either side, with a working door within, just looked polished and cleanly painted. These correctly looked like the wings of old theatres.

A large walkway ran around the orchestral pit, and a runway came centre between the musicians. This was dressed with many lightbulbs, also on the perimeter of the proscenium arch. No effort is too difficult for this company – attaching so many lightbulbs, a feat in itself. A sign, stage left, was continually changed to the cities the touring group visited. Another side board gave us *Uncle Jocko's Kiddie Show Seattle'* to begin the show.

Many scenes were represented by small rooms on trucks which were pushed on silently and always on cue. Their movement was always swift and helped with the quick pace of scene changes and the flow of the show. These rooms ranged from the kitchen of the Seattle home; with a central pine table, window on the upstage white wall and a door to the stage right wall; a burlesque theatre dressing room in Act II and the wide bedroom of the digs. All were always superbly dressed; with furniture indicative of the period, e.g the boarding room with an older looking table, iron bedsteads and a chest of drawers, upstage. Detailed dressing continued in the theatre dressing room - stacked with boxes, costumes and hats, etc – representing the backstage paraphernalia. In addition, a dressing table, placed downstage right.

The car looked effective but some of the detail was lost being set so far upstage. The upstage gauze curtain correctly represented the see-through stage tabs of the burlesque theatre. With cactus set for Act II, with bunting between, and colourful stage furniture for the auditions, the sense of vaudeville acts was nicely provided.

All stage furniture and properties looked suitably of the period and always matched the context of each scene or character. Each scene looked interesting.

Together, props and stage crew really kept this piece running quickly. Well done!

Lighting and Sound

Lighting and sound effects which contribute towards the dramatic potential, etc.

To begin, before the overture, downlighters gave us a green glow. Unfortunately, illumination was late for the small girl. Although the car (upstage) was well lit, the actors' faces were in shadow during this short sequence. Generally, though, the stage was evenly lit with good coverage. I liked the occasional fades after some songs. Also, the flashing /strobe effect of lighting as the youth changed to their adult counterparts was excellent, providing a good sequence of dancing and continuity.

You had good synchronisation of extra light as Louise opened the blinds in the digs. I liked the blue, cool light here as everyone was frantically tidying up, and after, the slow dimming as the focus switched, using a tight spot of light, to Louise on the bed. This is just one example of excellent, smooth transitions in lighting. Again, we saw such in the super change on focus and the stage areas as she (as Gypsy Rose Lee) continually returned to the upstage gauze for her burlesque performances.

Lighting also serves to create mood and to project atmosphere and here both were provided, so helping with the telling of the story and to provide settings. Where needed, you practically closed-down playing areas as dictated by the libretto, thus ensuring we focused on characters and key dramatic moments - for example, slow fade to end scene 5 on Louise's sad face.

Sound effects were relevant to the libretto; screeching for the quickly leaving car just one example. All performers could be heard clearly against the band, (which is quite rare to say in the shows I have seen this year) therefore providing a nicely balanced and well managed organisation between cast microphones. Technically, a constant job extremely well done.

Both lighting and sound had excellent synchronisation with the cast. Super!

Costumes

Costumes which are in of the period, well fitting, colour co-ordinated and enhance characterisation.

Correctly the opening number had adults and '*children*' in long, outdoor coats to suggest mothers trailing their offspring round from theatre to theatre. As scripted, Jocko was in tartan. The costumes for the child auditionees all told their story; the balloons for the girl; and Baby Louise and June in blue and red respectively which helped the audience to identify them. The bowler hat, red waistcoat and bow tie indicated, for Ed, the agent/owner above his station.

With a nod to Shirley Temple, we had the bow in the hair and pink, childish-looking dress, with frills to stick out for June. The costume shouted precocious auditionee.

All in whites for the change, with adult costumes exactly replicating the Baby troupe ones. Thus, you effectively provided the continuity between both sets of actors and actresses – everything just looked identical.

The older (men) in the blue pyjamas gave that sense of uniformity and cohesion as one unit – as did as all the vaudeville routine costumes; from the dungarees with brightly coloured shirts for the farmhands to the Spanish dresses.

I liked the choice of dress for Rose in the Chinese restaurant; black with red spots but it looked weary, plain as befitting their lack of money. Equal attention to details and character portrayal was evident in the excellent burlesque costumes for the three ladies: butterfly wings, parts that lit up suggestively, a Roman soldier and feathers – all gaudy, over-the-top and brightly coloured. And to top it all, a super large cow. The men, in their suits matched the period very well.

All costumes always matched theme and characterisation and helped ground this show in the necessary contexts. Super!

Makeup and hair

Make hair and wigs which are in period and appropriate to the production (including size of venue) and assist in developing the character.

Wigs suited the period. All make-up and hair worn in a style suitable for the context of the show.

A super effort generally, and all correctly complimented an excellent array of costumes.

DIRECTION

Detailed study/knowledge and interpretation of the text; progressing the author's intent with creativity and sensitivity.

Using theatrical dynamics to communicate with the audience.

Appropriate delivery of the text using timing and rhythm.

Settings with regard to focus, pace and groupings.

Movement which is appropriate to the period and style of production.

Creating atmosphere and mood to develop the full dramatic impact.

Director and Production: Lee Brennan

There was a liveliness throughout the production. You ensured all the acting was projected with good energy and attack. Context is so important to the success of this show, and you ensured such was provided in spades. We had wonderful cameos of mothers dragging children to auditions as they moved, at times quickly, around the orchestra runway. These were frequent, and also distracted they eye from well-rehearsed scene changes. I liked the 'business' of the opening: the first 'child' with big arm movements; the fussing mothers; a clown; Jocko angry; the line-up of auditionees; Rose walking forward with the dog - all suggesting the disorganised, chaotic vibrancy of the children being 'pulled' or forced from audition to audition.

In addition, we had the presentation of auditions and 'acts' pushed on by Rose. I liked the manner in which you integrated her presence in the auditions, either as introducer to the producer sat in the imaginary stalls, to remind the children of a song or move, or as she occasionally re-enacted a move or song that members of her troupe were performing. Her occasional involvement for me was a sad aspect of her personality – she just wanted to be involved, to relive her dreams through her child/troupe, and at times could not resist joining them. Here, in these situations, you repeatedly made sure we saw her zeal, excitement, hopes, energy and blind ignorance of the damage she was doing.

Much use was made of the trucks as small sets. They never constrained you. Moves for cast were purposeful and blocking was extremely rare. Whether around a table for the first kitchen scene, or between the bed and table for the party in the digs, you made sure movement was fluid and varied, sometimes coming forward of the trucks. Although short, the movement for Rose and Pop was smooth, did not look artificial in such a small space; one minute him leaning on the centre chair, the next sitting. The mime from the children in the car was good but due to its positioning upstage and with little light, features of their faces were lost. Could the car scene have been played downstage?

Also, perhaps the frenetic activity of the boys hiding as they were counted and moving the food in the digs was a little excessive – too much commotion as such did

lead the eye away from the characters acting their libretto. The movement continued a little too long.

You kept the pace flowing well throughout, even in some longer, self-reflective dramatic scenes. Dialogue between Rose and Herbie, or especially between Rose and adult Louise was always varied in intonation, and strong on delivery. You ensured so many facets of their characters, especially that of Rose, came across; their desires, upsets, dreams and frustrations. This was especially noticeable in the dressing room as Rose has the idea to push Louise forward to take the place of the missing star stripper. Playing her downstage with selfish zeal as she planned, as Herbie looked on upstage, was poignant, emotional and told us of the broken marriage promise. I liked the positioning here, the audience fully seeing reactions from both performers. You ensured he played simply - a good mood created here as he held quiet gravitas and authority. On his return, a controlled anger with both Rose and him kept tight on one spot - little movement to provide strength in the words - her insistent they could be married tomorrow.

Also, you ensured that through her performance, Samantha showed us the selfish desire and focus of Rose at the cost of the relationship with Louise. You allowed dialogue to speed up when needed to convey Rose's excitable ideas, e.g: when deciding, at the station, to put Louise on the stage.

Rich characterisations were developed by your goodself, allowing your cast to shine and portray a gamut of emotions; you guided powerful performances from strong performers, vocally, and no doubt with the MD's help through song, which flowed seamlessly from libretto and they were well acted.

Bringing the cast forward, especially in the strippers' song and occasionally for Rose, and for Gypsy really brought the performers right into our midst and you had potential to play characters a little more generally downstage – especially in Grantziger's office. Yes, perhaps you were restricted to the positions of the trucks parallel to their wing entrance, but often much of the acting was upstage. Closer would have helped us to more clearly see faces and expressions, especially as occasionally I felt eye lines from some members of the cast were a little low and we lost some expression on faces. Heads were slightly lowered: Baby June in the kitchen after the opening audition, Louise singing with the lamb, her face at times covered by the toy creature - head needed to be up thoughtful; June's head in the office when angry, and frequently Rose's head. In addition, in Grantziger's office, you placed one of the girls with their back to us on the bench. We lost her face. The bench needed to be set side on.

The station platform sequence was nicely acted - people nervous and afraid of telling the truth: that they wanted to leave now that Baby June had gone, and the fact she had eloped. I liked how they kept hitting each other blaming for secrets told.

I liked the way you narrowed down the playing area and helped the audience to focus on the song '*Small World*', as Rose sat on the costume basket. This was a lovely warm scene, where although scheming, the intonation in the song suggested a marriage made in heaven and a genuine interest in Herbie from Rose. After so much frantic movement, the contrast in the quiet sitting suggested a calm. Within minutes we were back to auditions with energy and good synchronisation.

Continually, you brought out the comedy; from the screams of the Baby June which humorously showed her precocious attitude of the child starlet to be; the attitude from the strippers, especially the sour Mazeppa, and in the awfully executed song by the Toreadorables to open Act II.

You made sure we were given many memorable images: Rose guiding from the back as June performed; the super transition from Baby June and newsboys played by youth to the adult counterparts; the good grouping of many people in various poses in the digs – on chair, bed and two chaps on the floor giving variety in height - all eagerly eating at the table; Rose mouthing every word signalling reminding the boys what to do when auditioning; Baby June and Baby Louise, arm around each other, leaning on each for the song in the office, and the super transition for Louise, from dressing room to burlesque stage to show her development.

The 'acting' always continued through the songs from the chorus and principals. Generally, movement around the stage was purposeful. You made sure cast moved quickly and decisively.

Characters were always on cue so providing excellent pace. You enabled your cast to change tempo when needed, to provide different atmospheres and moods, to generate audience reaction, making sure emotions were clearly conveyed. The cast could be heard clearly and managed the dialogue well. All the scenes were well rehearsed. Lines were fluently delivered, and you had obviously worked on their meaning with the cast.

Particularly impressive was the rich variety of characters you built up and developed through the cast performances. Also, the wonderful energy and synchronicity of the audition numbers which had colour, attack, humour, vibrancy, energetic dancing and tuneful singing.

An entertaining piece of musical theatre. Super!

Music and Musical Director – Paul Firth

From the first note, we knew we were in capable hands. A lovely trumpet solo and excellent brass was provided, adding to the varying dynamics of the overture; tempos suiting each song.

Continually you provided gentle accompaniment; especially for Baby June's first song '*Small World*' and for '*Little Lamb*' for Baby Louise.

There was a nice glockenspiel section leading into scene 6 of Act I.

Although '*You'll Never Get Away From Me*' lacked a little pace, generally all songs were attacked with good rhythm and a tempo which suited the lyrics, especially the lively audition numbers which always had energy, vibrancy and clear singing diction as well as playing. Individual parts, singer and instrumentalist - all could be clearly heard.

I enjoyed the clear diction and phrasing you had engendered from the cast, all guided and underpinned by a well-rounded and detailed orchestration. You made sure the mood of each song shone through the performances. A positive control and management of the vocals, especially with soloists, ensured a good and consistent standard was provided. Also, one liners were clearly heard.

Generally, the sensitive manner in which the band accompanied the company was nice to hear; a band responsive to the dynamics of the vocal line, as lyrics ebbed and flowed, playing skilfully to ensure volumes were consistent and complimentary to what was happening on stage.

Choreographer – Gary Jones-McCaw

Assistant Choreographer – Keavy Smith (choreographed Tulsa's number)

All the dance sequences generally emanated from the audition numbers. Therefore movement for these were lively, energetically quick and always in unison. In addition, such movement was always in context of the lyrics, capturing the pace and zeal of the vaudeville routines as Rose tried to impress. You included her very well, ensuring she was adding her input without being in the way of the physical steps, but looking as if she was interrupting.

For both Junes, but especially Baby, movement was excellent, including high kicks, side steps, waddling like a duck, tapping, etc. The actress poured so much energy into these sequences, as did the older June where you nicely replicated the steps.

The military dance incorporated erect bodies, speed, excellent hand gestures and arm movement; all in fast-paced unison. The transition (helped by lighting) into the adult versions, running on to displace the younger ones who fell (danced) backwards superbly captured a sense of flow of time. Their quick steps and good extended arm control here always held together as one unit. Very enjoyable to watch.

In effect, you trained three troupes, who always danced cleanly with attention to detail and discipline in body control and hold. Super smiles, as they tried to impress, were on faces. In the farm scene, we had side steps with one hand on their hat to depict a simplicity and distinct shape. The cow duet was good – silly, comical, but in super unison with June. The Toreadorables were cleverly disorientated.

Tulsa sold a super story through his dance and I liked how you kept the moves stilted for Louise to depict her awkward lack of fluid skill. You ensured his movement looked smooth, debonair and flowing, with nice extended arms.

You also created excellent contextualised movement for Mazeppa, Electric and Tessie; slightly awful but sexily swaying, twisting and walking to position.

To conclude - a super effort to move so many around with apparent ease and everyone looking confident in their steps and body movement – all looking as if naturally emanating from song or libretto. Actions were well suited to song moods, contexts and messages. Super discipline with good teamwork.

Please note, that as this was an ensemble piece it will be difficult to give you each a defined commentary. Suffice to say, I will endeavour to describe contributions as fully as possible. No insult is intended if I have not mentioned a role you undertook, but in general terms, everyone made a vital and good contribution to the evening.

Opening number and general:

I have already stated some observations in the director section, but generally good character work from everyone with super facial expression; a lovely smile from the girl with balloons and super alarmed screams as they were popped by Rose. Good facial expression here.

Uncle Jocko / Angie– Ben Drane

You conveyed the angry, slightly dismissive and impatient auditioner very well. The need, and slight impatience, to have the mothers removed was good, with frustration

coming through clearly in the voice. I liked your good surprise when Rose appears with the dog and starts organising. Although I could not find your line, "*Is this really happening?*" in the libretto, such summed up his consternation. Although a brief role, it is important in helping to set the context of the conveyor belt type of auditions where decisions regarding worthiness of the performer were quickly fired out. Your manner and voice provided this very well.

As Angie, you provided a vital contribution to a very well organised and eager troupe of dancers and singers. You held your body well and danced with a fluid movement.

Baby Louise - Brodie Smith

You have to set the tone and method of acting for the later Louise played by Laura. You did this very well, making sure you were uneasy with the numbers and auditioning, and that you looked a shy and a quiet girl. There was an honest sadness about lines such as "*I performed*" when wondering why her sister could sleep in the same bed as their mother. I enjoyed the good miming of travel in the car. Although a brief role, handled confidently. Well done!

Baby June - Holly Dewsnap

This was a tremendously energetic and 'loud' performance which had us entranced. High kicks, splits, good dancing - all achieved with fluidity and panache, with skill and attack. The singing voice was good in '*Let Me Entertain You*', the expression was clear, her attitude constantly trying to please; smiling, gregarious and annoying at the same time. The Uncle Sam speech was loud and had good phrasing. You maintained super eye contact with the audience. There was a lovely element of comedy here with the yelps. I very much enjoyed this performance – the most lively I've seen in such a short amount of time onstage. Excellent.

Mama Rose – Samantha Bates

This was a powerful and extremely focused performance which conveyed her guile, selfishness, drive (often misguided) zeal and love of the theatre – if not her own desire to be a 'star' which you portrayed very well at the end of her story.

You made sure we knew that Rose was certain of what she wanted and lived out her vicarious dreams through her elder daughter. You capably conveyed that blinkered focus on said child and equally showed the disapproval and dismay at the lack of talent exhibited by Louise.

Acting was of a high standard with plenty of excellent body control and posture to show her rants, disagreements, urging on in auditions and plans. Although facial expression was excellent, often you tended to dip your eyeline when looking at another member of the cast and to the audience.

For example, on "*I pushed you aside for her*" and when remonstrating with Louise "*your friend Herbie can do no wrong*". We still saw your face but sometimes not fully, and some opportunities were lost for us to completely see your skilled expression. Near the end when delivering the line, "*Everybody has stomach not me*", looking away in sadness and reflection would have been preferable to looking down.

Through clearly enunciated libretto, utilising a super American accent, and pitch

perfect singing in well-acted songs, we had good gestures and actions. And so, you provided so many moods: anger at the beginning with Grandpa on “never” with added sarcasm to him on “*You’ve done the same dull thing every dull day*”; a cool dismissive tone of voice against Louise evident in, “*it ain’t the same. Now say goodnight and go to bed,*” finding it difficult to hug her which nicely showed the poor relationship with her; a scheming look (at the audience) on, “*You’re not married*” when first meeting Herbie; an opinionated tone and strong body stance on “*awful lot of butter to get you back into the frying pan*”; in the office leaning menacingly over the desk, spitting out consonants on, “*I am her mother*” and “*I have a job dear and I do it quite well.*”

Such rich and varied vocal intonation was very much evident in song, such as ‘*Small World*’ sung gently. Amidst her planning, there was a calmness, a relief she had met Herbie - coupled with a hint of her acceptance of him and the help she would receive. In the final number, we just knew of her passion to have been the ‘star’ with sadness at lost opportunities running under, and perhaps even jealousy. At the station platform, you rightly stood in shock having read the letter from June regarding her departure; you looked angry, worried, which slowly changed into purposeful dreaming and excited planning as tempo and speed of singing increased to reflect her zeal. Thus, you capably conveyed the wish to make Louise a star, vindicated by whatever reason she sadly could cling onto, which led into the powerfully discharged ‘*Everything Is Coming Up Roses*’ with excellent determination in the last verse.

This gradual increase in tempo and pace as ideas formed was also employed successfully when hearing Pастey and Cigar boss talking about the free ‘star’ spot at the burlesque club. As the mind went into overdrive to push Louise into that role, the sadness and dismissiveness of Herbie, watching from the back, came across clearly. Yes, good libretto helped, but the purposeful tone to the voice, the quickly darting gestures and body movement also implied nothing would stop or get in the way of one of Rose’s ideas. This was a vital part of your portrayal, and as such was always effectively transmitted.

And to end, role reversal as she became the ‘child’ – tetchily wanting her own way, and perhaps left out of Louise’s plans as she had once omitted Louise from hers. Talking to herself backstage led into and through a capably delivered final number – full of anger with herself.

To conclude, a tour-de-force, a masterclass in how to hold the body to exude characterisation, a powerful portrayal of selfish zeal, and lovely intonation through libretto and lyric to provide tuneful, rich singing. Excellent and very much enjoyed and appreciated by the audience.

Pop – Andrew Ryder

As the father you made sure we knew his frustration and anger with Rose regarding false dreams she was selling to the girls. You moved slowly and truthfully, sometimes leaning on the chair back, to reflect his age. I liked the look of pride when talking about the plaque and how like it, Rose should stay at home. To start, eye lines with the audience were slightly low but this was corrected. A nice little character study.

Ed Weber / Kringelein /Cigar – Gavin Stamper

I liked your patient pose, hands in pockets, as Weber was waiting for Rose to stop hassling and pushing him. A super fed-up look was conveyed regarding her. Your

voice was at times strident towards her.

As Cigar Man you made sure we realised that his only concern was what was going to happen on the stage. I liked the way he shut Rose up, and libretto was delivered in a quick manner. Accents and mannerisms nicely changed for each character, especially Kringelein. Three different roles handled well. Super!

Herbie – Jon Crebbin

Yours was a quiet performance; subtle, contained and yet powerful. He just needed a big song and I so wish the character had been given one, having heard your excellent singing voice last time. With what you were given, intonation was excellent. There was a brooding sadness at the end of your character's appearance as finally he realised he was second fiddle to Rose's whims and passions. Your looks at her as she fussed and organised and planned in the dressing room were excellent, conveying that sense he had lost something, that there was little hope. To help with this authority and gravitas, you always stood tall, with excellent posture and you maintained super eye contact with the audience and cast members.

You made sure Herbie was the kind-hearted, warm man as suggested in the libretto, a warm smile as Rose sang '*Small World*.' Both of you sat on the basket. In the restaurant you were the quiet voice of reason – a good duet here with Rose. You were gentle in the office, upset at the mistake but efficiently and quietly trying to fix the problem and find a solution.

Good intonation was used on the station platform, trying to find a diplomatic way forward. "*I can be district manager*" followed by the look of worry at Rose's new fixation on Louise. I liked the look of surprise when Rose asked Herbie to marry him, and the firm but softly insistent voice directed at Pasty, that Rose was a lady and warning him to treat her and the company with respect.

A lovely, subtle and meaningful portrayal, thoughtfully acted with precision and integrity. Excellent.

The Newsboys - Children's ensemble

You supplied a series of tightly organised and rehearsed sequences in the show – singing and dancing were excellent. Fast paced movement was always in good unison and handled very well. The energy you gave was excellent.

Louise – Laura Meredith-Hoyle

I enjoyed this performance immensely. Excellent body posture with arms by sides (especially looking frightened at one point in the office) projected the awkward child. I liked the nervous tension, again with arms close to body, when bringing on the letter left by June for Rose – you held a shy, frightened posture.

Slowly, this posture in the burlesque theatre changed and arms were widened, and you seemed to grow physically into the role of Lee as the confidence in her new found vocations shone through your detailed performance. You walked with greater elegance and poise. In addition, good use of body control when dancing in Act II - hampily making a mess of the number but trying like good trouper to carry on. I liked the anger that she Louise was not June. Then to show your variety of expression, the good *trying to please* expressions for the song with little jumps attempting the dance.

I also appreciated the vocal adaptation applied; first with a childish higher voice as the daughter - which was sustained in every song, and then, changing this voice into the adult Rose Lee; the vocal tone at the end with Mother distinctly clear, forthright, certain, possibly strident. In addition, the Rose Lee 'stage' persona utilising a huskier, sexier voice.

Facial expression was always excellent as epitomised by the worried, nervous walks and glances as you approached the burlesque stage, growing in confidence. As suggested, a scared, but increasingly more grown up voice, coupled with awkward steps showed the transition.

Normally you maintained excellent eye-line with cast and audience - head up with clear enunciation. Care though as the toy lamb did cover your face slightly when sat on the bed, and in the office, eye lines were lowered but better when raised towards the end of the scene. I liked the Lamb song with a nicely sustained note to end. The giggles in the office were childishly effective. On the station platform, super worried looks as Rose suggested making Louise a star – but again head down slightly. Often more is gained when looking away to the side in pain, sadness or worry rather than down.

To conclude, an excellent performance, carefully thought through and played with precision. A super accent was always maintained through libretto and song. Nice harmony with June in "*If Mama Was Married*" is just one example of strong, dynamic singing with good acting of lyric to support vocal intonation. A journey was definitely, and effectively shown. Excellent!

June and Mazeppa - Claire Egerton

Essential to this role was the ability to make an effective transition from Baby to more mature. This replication was handled very well, ensuring moves in the song, and similar vocal squeals were provided- a mirror image as you continued to dance and sing well in the Shirley Temple look.

You brought a rich liveliness to the role - an energy and attack. You had to – a difficult characterisation as you had to follow and build upon the excellent performance by Brodie. But you needed to provide the depth of adulthood, the desires and thoughts, which were all capably portrayed. Throughout, a super accent and nice harmony in '*Mama Was Married*' number. You made sure that June's realisation that she was in a poor troupe came across well, her increasing dissatisfaction capably shown as she matured.

As Mazeppa, I enjoyed the bugle playing (or excellent miming to the band) and the attitude you conveyed so well; angry to Tessie about being asked to do lines. You acted a wonderful frustration during the song, '*You Gotta Get A Gimmick*' which was sang and acted very well with good intonation. Dialogue was always delivered with sharp, precise clarity. Two, very different roles, superbly delivered and I would not have realised we had one skilled actress.

Mr Goldstone – Paul Ryan

Although none speaking, you acted well, looking surprised as Rose fussed and sang around him.

Yonkers – Samuel Maurice
L.A – Simon Fitzpatrick
Angie – Ben Drane
Tulsa – Gary Jones McCaw

Singing and dancing were excellent with super energy and attack. As a unit you worked very well – no doubt rehearsal paid off with clean, disciplined dance moves and tuneful lyrics with good intonation. You could all be clearly heard in the 'digs' and cues were taken up quickly. Your antics and quick moves in the digs were funny and well-choreographed, each one knowing their routine and actions in the house when hiding.

I liked Yonkers' moans at Louise for getting up and disturbing everyone, and his pride with his present. The 'joshing' on the station platform was indicative of teenagers, playfully hitting each other as wrong comments were made. I liked the excitable delivery regarding their train tickets.

Tulsa – Gary Jones McCaw

As part of the Newsboys/Farmboys, dancing was excellent. I liked the manner in which you clearly conveyed his embarrassment when discovered in the alley practising – followed by the excitement as he imagined his costume.

The dance here followed his words well and was capably executed, including good discipline and shaping of the arms on 'debonair'. The acting and miming throughout the song. '*All I Need is A Girl*' was good, supporting a tuneful rendition. You created a warmth opposite Louise.

Miss Cratchitt and Electra - Amy Turner

As the secretary you looked business-like and spoke with a clear, well-mannered efficient manner. I liked the intonation on "*That's the agent – he's nice.*" Also, a nice insistence she had tried to tell the mother. I liked the disbelief that Grantziger had liked the show and the briefness of the matter-of-fact explanation regarding being booked in at the Variety.

Then as Electra, a super dance and song. You utilised a throaty delivery for the libretto and a warmth to Louise as she left to go to the stage to take the 'star' spot. I liked the look of surprise on your face that she had said yes. Movement as you strutted your 'stuff' to light up the clothing was indicative of the context and persona. Two excellent roles. Super!

Agnes – Megan Sykes

You were sweetly innocent but determined about your new name. I liked the look of excitement at the prospect of a blonde wig and the good look of surprise as you entered the burlesque house. Although a brief role, you were always clearly heard.

Pastey – Samuel Maurice

You made sure a completely different character was provided – officious, wanting everyone to jump to his tune and dismissive, quickly organising the girls into various dressing rooms. An uncaring manner came across well, and a meekness once

Herbie had warned him. Your dialogue opposite Cigar Man was quick and clear, offhand with him and derisory. You ably presented the busy backstage manager pushing everyone into position but without time for the niceties of life.

Tessie Tura– Sarah Thewliss

A confident, clear, well-judged performance giving us the brash, brassy and blousy strip girl with years of experience. I loved your cackling laugh showing her commonness. You always maintained super eye contact with Cigar man and was short to the point of rude, flatly refusing to do lines. I liked your derisory laugh in the *Where? In the Vatican?* The sarcasm to Herbie, asking for his protection was lovely.

OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT (or CONCLUSION)

An excellent understanding of the author's intent. Direction which shows skill, originality, sensitivity and creativity using all the theatrical tools of pace, focus, delivery, timing and rhythm.

Talented actors creating highly effective dramatic impact.

Evidence of teamwork and unselfish ensemble playing.

Actors who interact and react and a production team who use all resources to create atmosphere and mood.

Constantly good movement around the set ensured variety in the playing. Everyone had lots of energy, especially children ensemble and adult ensembles.

Lighting and sound were excellent. Along with detailed dressing in trucked sets and super costumes, they created 'variety' and 'burlesque' settings.

The music was full, occasionally gentle and was sympathetic to soloists. Strongly layered and tuneful accompaniment really helped to bring out the vibrant quality of the choral pieces.

All characterisations were very good – in some cases excellent.

Yes, some heads were down slightly, but overall this was an enjoyable, superior production with at least three very skilled performances, as detailed at the beginning.

Thank you for your warm welcome – my apologies for the late arrival of this adjudication. I did not have a script to go from. Many thanks to Claire for her hard work sorting me out a copy, and for cast names.

Adjudicator (print)	D. B. Carlile
Date	24.05.18