



SOUTH WEST AREA

***Witches of Eastwick – TAOS Musical Theatre***

***Arc Theatre***

***Thursday 5th June***

Reviewed by: Petra Schofield NODA Regional Representative, District 10

Thank you for your invitation to the Witches of Eastwick; it was great to see it so well attended and I hope that the tickets sales for the week were strong.

It is a bold show to undertake in many ways, it is demanding of performers and also a challenge for an audience who may be new to the piece. The music is also fairly complex with a huge range of styles and nuances that need to be captured to make it all fit together.

The three witches were well cast (Lou Knight, Leonie Macaslin and Dora Bishop), each creating a strong character and vocally blending very well; the solo work was also very good.

Gary Robson as Darryl Van Horne worked hard in this hugely challenging role, a huge challenge both dramatically and vocally with the central "Dance with the Devil" really needs to raise the roof. The supporting Gabriel family caught the nature of Eastwick with good energy, reflecting the values and moral stance of this community turned upside down.

All supporting company were strong and confident, clearly well drilled and working hard to achieve a full and rounded production. Annabella Fairgrieve also captured the rather obscure role of "little girl" with good precision and vocals.

The loyal townspeople were in good voice and always a pleasure to see so many people on stage sharing a production and having a great time.

The technical side of the production was always going to pose a few issues on such a small stage. Generally this was well managed although choices of props / furniture caused extended scene changes that affected the flow of the scenes. If you find yourself with a scene change I would suggest that it is covered with incidental music from either the previous or forthcoming scene as watching a silent dark stage breaks concentration. It would also be worth considering costuming some of the stage team so that the changes become a little more fluid and less exposed. The "lift" option for the flying was successful; perhaps a further cheat with lighting might have made them appear a little higher than they were.

The projection was a good idea that could have maybe been explored a little further into other

scenes.

The orchestra with MD Julian Celementson did a good job supporting the company and soloists well, a good wholesome sound.

Occasionally there was interference with the sound; I do not know whether there was a particular issue but at times there was an audible electronic hiss which was quite distracting.

This was a real step into a different world for TAOS and all credit for taking on something more modern and challenging. Hopefully it will also bring in a wider audience for onward productions and raise the profile of the group further. I also trust those who come into a group for a show, stay to support the company rather than develop a pick and choose culture which makes planning very difficult for the committee. This was a brave decision and I hope it opens new avenues for TAOS to consider in the future. Good luck!

Thank you again and look forward to seeing you later in the year.

Petra Schofield

NODA District Representative Region 10