

Legally Blonde

Viva at The Brook Soham

Legally Blonde is a show which lives on its energy and rarely pauses to take a breath, and keeps the music coming thick and fast. The characters, particularly the females, require double energy, to belt out a tune, cut a move and even in some instances get handy with a skipping rope.

Legally Blonde, as you may well know, centres around the antics of the delightful Elle Woods, a sweet-natured girl who decides to take up a career in law while pursuing her ex-boyfriend Warner to none other than Harvard Law School, hoping to win him back. RILEY WILLIAMS was every bit the leading lady. She zipped her way through Legally Blonde with a great voice, excellent timing and a pleasing characterisation of Elle.

Her leading men equally impressed – BEN CLARK was suitably endearing as the likeable Emmett, Elle's only supporter and confidante at Harvard, who got the chance to showcase his powerful vocals. DAN LANE, meanwhile, produced yet one more quality performance as her former beau Warner, exuding presence on stage Dan has a voice perfect for musicals.

Elle and Warner's supporting cast include the scene-stealing ELEANOR GILLETT as Paulette, who was superb in this role. HANNAH SCHUMANN as Brooke gave us an athletic performance in Whipped into Shape and was formidable in the prison/court scenes. LAURA LEONARD struggled with the accent at times as the bitchy Vivienne but made up for it vocally. JOSEPH BEACH was a class act as Callahan. Powerful vocally and a commanding presence in all his scenes. The "Greek Chorus" NADIA SAIF, SHELLEY MARTIN and KERRY HIBBERT threw themselves into it all with abandon. Good support too came from SAMMY WILLIAMS (Enid), JACK WRIGHT (Yuri & Dewey), MAX BOVINGDON (Nicos/ Harvard Professor) together with LEE "GLEE" SHERWOOD in his element as The FedEx Man and the thirty-eight other Delta Nu/Greek Chorus/Ensemble players.

The staging of this production was excellent. Viva always manages to transform The Brook venue ingeniously. The stage this time was a huge square with the orchestra pit "sunk" in the middle. Every inch of the stage was used and, at times filled, by this huge cast. The adaptable settings were mainly on wheels which were swiftly rolled on and off, together with the large furniture items which were dealt with ably and swiftly by MAGGIE BRAKENRIDGE and the hardworking crew, saving us long blackouts. Costumes were absolutely splendid and the wigs and make-up good although you may wish to look at Callahan's stubble which transferred to poor Elle. Elle also has radio-mic problems. It was very crackly after one quick change and didn't seem to be working at all at one point. First night gremlins often raise their heads and that is just a niggle really.

DAN SCHUMANN directed Legally Blonde to a high standard, together with his assistant EMMA MOAT. Choreographers LOUISE PLUMMER and JESSICA CLIFFORD and MD RICHARD HAYWARD. . This team worked their actors and chorus hard both in dance and music and it showed. Congratulations to this huge and energetic cast. Every single member gave everything to the first-night performance. It had energy from start to finish and was performed with confidence by all involved. This show was a credit to Viva and you deserve the sold out houses you will undoubtedly enjoy. Bravo!

Julie Petrucci

Regional Representative NODA East District Four South.