

Review by Kylie Pedler (Adelaide Theatre Guide)

VICTOR VICTORIA

Hills Musical Company Inc
Stirling Community Theatre
Until 26 Apr 2008

Themes of gender alterations, gay tolerance and frequent bedroom changes provide an entertainingly funny script. However this production is often lifeless and uninspiring.

Victoria, with the guidance of her gay accomplice, pretends to be a man, pretending to be a woman in a Paris nightclub and receives instant acclaim. Things soon become complicated when King Marchan falls in love with Victor (whom he is lead to believe is a man).

While Elizabeth MacGregor (Victor/Victoria) demonstrates she has a lovely voice, her performance lacks emotion and the necessary charisma to woo her audience. Greater direction is needed to express the appropriate femininity of Victoria in contrast to Victor's masculinity.

Greg Beer (Carroll "Toddy" Todd) and Colin Boulden (Squash Bernstein) give adequate performances. John Greene (King Marchan) delivers a professional performance in "King's Dilemma" despite the musical accompaniment's imperfections.

The show standout is Valerie Clayton as ditzzy blonde Norma Cassidy, providing much needed comic relief. Thoroughly entertaining, and extremely funny, she excels in each scene earning genuine applause and laughter. Her opening solo of "Chicago Illinois" is appropriately tawdry.

Hilarious, drunk chambermaid (Fiona Aitken) also deserves a mention.

Rebecca Stanley, in her first major choreographic role, demonstrates great creativity in numbers such as "Le Jazz Hot" and "Victor/Victoria". They are slick, well polished and encapsulate the "Fosse" style. However, the lethargic dancers don't do the numbers justice. Inadequate space and incorrect timing prove distracting in other numbers. This may be due to Jo Hunt's orchestra, which sounds underrehearsed. Most musical numbers show imperfect intonation and have tempo problems.

The costume design is excellent, particularly the stylishly flattering "Le Jazz Hot" piece (created by Michelle Brow and Sue Winston). David Lampard's design is imaginative and artistic. The two-level set in purples, blues and burgundy creates a classy mood and resourceful scene changes.

But director Amanda Taylor unfortunately does not utilise its potential, leaving cast blocking themselves and others with many awkward entrances up and down stairs. Poor set and lighting changes often find cast and crew on stage at inappropriate times.

This 'Victor/Victoria' is not the most captivating production, but a few good numbers and moments of comical relief make it worthwhile.

Review by Admin (Blaze Magazine) on Mar 28th, 2008

Victor-Victoria

The story of a woman impersonating a man impersonating a woman – yeah right!

VICTORIA: “No one is that gullible, they’ll know he’s a phoney.”

TODDY: “Exactly, they’ll know HE’S a phoney!”

And so the fun starts when Toddy begins Victoria’s transformation into Europe’s biggest female impersonator - Count Victor Grazinsky.

The story begins when Victoria Grant is left cold and hungry in Paris after the producer of a touring light opera company takes leave with the company’s funds. She then meets Toddy, a down on his luck gay man who works in a night club.

With nowhere to go and no funds to do it with, Victoria goes along with Toddy’s plan and it all goes exceptionally well, until the owner of one of the biggest nightclubs in Chicago arrives in town with his lady friend Norma and finds he is attracted to the amazing Victor.

King Marchan has never been wrong when it comes to women, but could this be the first time? Could he be ... gay?

Things become more interesting when Norma is sent packing back to Chicago and his partners arrive on the scene to further complicate things. There are a few more surprises to be had, before this story comes to its happy ending in this hilarious gender bender musical from Blake Edwards (based on the film of the same name) with music by Henry Mancini and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse with additional lyrics by Frank Wildhorn.

Director Amanda Taylor has assembled a talented cast of 18 headed by Libby McGregor as Victoria. Greg Beer is Toddy, John Green is King and Valerie Clayton stars as Norma.

The supporting cast includes Max Rayner, Barry Hill, Colin Boulden, Malcolm Walton, Josh Sanders, and Adam Harrison. Jo Hunt is in charge of the great music, and the vibrant and energetic choreography is by Rebecca Stanley.

Presented by the award winning The Hills Musical Co., performances begin on Thursday April 10 through to Saturday April 26 on Thurs, Fri. and Sat nights @ 8pm with a matinee on Sunday 20 April at 2pm at the Stirling Community Theatre Avenue Rd, Stirling.

Bookings can be made now at Stirling Newsagency phone 8339-4041 or at BASS on 131-246 or www.bass.net.au (booking fees apply.)

Review by Matt Byrne (Sunday Mail)

April 13, 2008 12:15am

HENRY Mancini's Victor/Victoria is a show with a big heart and delicious sexual peccadilloes.

It needs energy, anarchy and androgyny, as we see ailing soprano Victoria Grant and her gay saviour Toddy turn Paris on its queerest ear in search of stardom.

Amanda Taylor's production has plenty of kinky kinks to iron out, but should settle down with time, and Rebecca Stanley's choreography has some stylish moments.

Libby McGregor handles the difficult double act of a woman playing a female impersonator with a deep rich voice, but Crazy World needs more passion if it is to close Act I with satisfaction.

Greg Beer as her well-connected manager Toddy guides her shot at the big time with panache and equanimity, their You And Me duet is nicely essayed.

John Greene makes a too amiable King Marchan, while Valerie Clayton looks the part as his blonde bombshell floozy Norma, but there's a million more laughs in the part if she can find them.

New face Colin Boulden does a great job as King's surprising bodyguard, Squash Bernstein, and there's solid support from Barry Hill and Max Rayner.

It's a good looking production, and as gay as Paris, but the physical business needs more oomph, and the jazz could get even hotter.

Hills Musical Company
Stirling Community Theatre

**1/2 (two-and-a-half stars)

The players:

Libby McGregor, Greg Beer, John Greene, Valerie Clayton, Colin Boulden, Max Rayner, Barry Hill and ensemble

Behind the scenes: Director Amanda Taylor, musical director Jo Hunt, choreographer Rebecca Stanley.

Standout: Libby McGregor.

In Short: It's a crazy cross-gender world!