

BROS Theatre Company

THE BOY FRIEND • JUNE 1992 • PARKSHOT THEATRE

REVIEW • RICHMOND AND TWICKENHAM TIMES

Good news for Barnes & Richmond Operatic Society last week was that their presentation of The Boy Friend, which played to packed houses in the Parkshot Studio, has been nominated for a NODA 'chorus' award.

This recognises the excellent (if underlit) staging by director Susan Humphries with dance assistance by Angela Sturgeon; and the spirited playing of Maggie Dawson, Katie Hart and Janet Simpson as pretty jeune filles and Jeremy Curtis, Robert Murray and Kevin Price as their French beaux, all working wonders within the tiny space provided by David Casey's two-level setting.

But the production was also notable for dazzling set pieces and individual performances, led by Heather Hodgson's growly Madame Dubonnet as a Claudette Colbert lookalike with the lightest mezzo voice, partnering Richard Matthiae as the unbending Percival Browne who scored a jolly double entendre with 'I was a fool to believe the old Percy was dead'!

Marie Creed's pretty blonde Polly, vocally sunny, sometimes allowed rain to over-cloud her face. But her song and dance duets with Carl Smith's charming Tony were the musical standouts of the show, executed with rhythmed grace and deft footwork.

Second lead Elizabeth Shergold was a bubbly Maisie most at home with the boys and Safety in Numbers, kicking over chairs in her high spirits; and coupled with Chris Warden's limber Bobby in a Charleston number so lively it threatened to shred the loose stage cloth.

Robert Salter as the monocled Lord Brockhurst found one or two new notes to tell Maggie Dawson's giggly, boop-de-dooping Dulcie that It's Never too Late, and was called sternly to order by Marion McLaren's stately m'Lady. And the speciality tango by Andrew Devlin and Dorne Hill carried a strong erotic charge.

But my own special favourites were Sonya Raymond's Hortense with an excruciating French accent, Gavin Morgan investing his tiny cameo roles as a gendarme and a waiter with rich character comedy, and musical director Alex Collinson's light rippling touch on the piano backed by four excellent musicians. Bravo!

John Thaxter