

Production: Sweeney Todd
Director Racheal Cordell

Stage Theatre Society
Hazlet Theatre Maidstone

In November 1979 I sat in my seat on Broadway watching Len Cariou and Angela Lansbury playing the leads in Sondhiem's "Sweeny Todd", and I thought to myself, will I ever see this released for armatures in the UK. Well here it is, my dreams have come to fruition.

STS were very brave to bring this to the Haslett...Sondhiem is difficult enough for adults let alone a young group.

"Young" perhaps is word I use loosely as this group are very adult in their acting abilities and outlook.

Racheal Cordell (Director) has brought this group of young people to a high standard in this production. Direction was slick and tight .. as only Rachael knows of a Sondhiem piece..Sondhiem can sometimes be directed slow and boring but she pulled out the stops with STS and her casting of good leads and exuberant chorus ..well done Rachael.

Jo Clements (Musical director) of the Principles and chorus got these young persons ..(some with no training I suspect) to sing this difficult score near perfect. But I thought the conductor needed to know the score better and needed to pick up on music cues ... there were gaps from dialogue to music.

Set was built for this production and worked well on such a small stage...one main centre piece served many scenes...good lighting..and costumes were adequate.

Kieran Mellish at 14 took on the role of "sweeny" a role not easy for the greatest actors and delivered it with Dramatic ease..taking pace, drama, some comedy, and singing all under his excellent stage presence..but we could see Kieran liked the blood a smile appeared.. a young Anthony Newley came through in his voice, great. For those of us that remember a great voice in the Musical theatre.

Mrs Lovett (Faye Wyatt)looked good and brought out the comedy in her characterisation of Lovett, but I felt she was holding back, and could have been more busy..and dare I say it OTT.

My character of this piece was (Sadie Brown) as the Begger Women ..what a voice projection and diction ...excellent.Johanna(Ellie Shields)and Anthony (Simon Vandeppeer)were teamed well in their parts as the young lovers..Tobias (Joel Blundell) sang his part boyishly well and nice to see a girl play Pirelli (Bekki Lowings)..Judge Turpin (Aaron Simmonds) had a nice "plumb in his mouth" acting voice and diction was good..but I felt he needed to look up more..perhaps this was nerves..as I believe it was his first big part.. his Beadle (Issac Allen) shadowed him well.

Choreography by (Rebecca Beaumont) Rebecca seems to be a busy women at the moment, so many shows being choreographed by this talented women and she kept her standard up in this one..

My main grip was lack off props..lots of flour.dough,PIES were needed, imaginary pies do not work...sorry.

Thank you STS for inviting me and I enjoyed my evening of blood and gore,you should ALL be proud of yourselves.

Gordon Harris NODA area.5