

2014 -2015

**“Colour my World” presented by The Cabaret Club, Mawgan Porth,
Seen by Joan Betts and Sally Robinson 24 March 2015**

THE SHOW : This was a musical revue show covering four stages of life: childhood, growing-up, middle age, and the senior years. Each stage was illustrated with appropriate songs, lovely washes of colour in the costumes, and beautifully painted backdrops and stage legs.

PRESENTATION

Sets: in the first section a dark stage was soon decorated with a backcloth and legs painted with branches of trees covered in blossom against a blue sky – suitable for the beginning of life, and setting off the white costumes well. The second section revealed a snow-covered mountain-scape in strong colours, giving a sense of drama as life becomes more exciting, and then in section three we enjoyed a strongly geometric set - colours looking rather like a Rubik cube - and with the names of fashion icons such as Chanel, Versace, Prada, Louis Vuitton putting us right in the material world. The last section was backed by a cloth of birds and plants in blue and gold, which also gave an impression of under the sea. The two changes of scene in Act I and Act II were masked by performances in front of tabs, and even seated close to the stage we could hear no distracting noise backstage.

Lighting and Sound: lighting was good throughout, using lovely colour washes, sympathetic spot-lighting and appropriate disco effects when needed. Sound control of the recorded music was well-judged and also that of the performers who were wearing face mikes.

Costume: as we've come to expect from the Cabaret Club, the costumes in this production were first-class. Dressing everyone in white for the beginning of their journey through life was a nice touch, and colour crept into the pictures as the show progressed. The ladies and children looked good, and the men's outfits were admirable – white trousers and shirts and well-fitting cummerbunds. It was good to see all the ladies wearing the same coloured tights and matching shoes throughout the show. The pink and white party dress was lovely.

Section Two was a wonderful mix of straight-forward purples, reds, greens, yellows in dresses, men's shirts and children's outfits.

Section Three after the interval was a great contrast from the first Act; we were treated to a very sparkly picture with blue and silver metallic costumes worn by the ladies with impressive silver headdresses. Fantastic suits were worn by all the men – the multicoloured ones were especially eye-catching. We loved the tiny hats worn by the performers, also the coloured bowlers. The men looked very dashing in their penguin suits and loose black ties, and they were complemented beautifully by the gorgeous blue bodice dresses worn by the ladies.

Section Four opened with four ladies dressed in lovely purple dresses and red hats. This colour scheme was carried through the whole section – through the very attractive 'aerobics' scene to all the ladies appearing in well-fitting lace dresses and matching accessories.

Huge congratulations to the Mistresses of the Cloth who have once again created such a colourful display of costumes for this show.

Makeup: this was all very good, and we were impressed by the children's tidy hair and some splendid wigs for the comedy men's numbers.

Props: there were good props throughout, including musical instruments and a selection of gift bags with big brand names to match those on the scenery. The dressing table and clothes rack were good.

STAGE DIRECTION

The whole plan for this show was a charming idea, the passage of our life through the four ages, and the choice of music was excellent. There were many well-known numbers but also a fair few with which your adjudicators were not familiar ! The children's numbers were well performed, both in singing and dance, and the adults really came into their own after the interval, taking us through the glitzy material world of middle age and into the golden years that follow.

The mixture of solo items and chorus numbers was very acceptable, and the balance of serious music, bright numbers and comic moments was well judged. However, maybe one or two less numbers could be considered.

Scenery and costumes were all first-class, and the progress from one number or scene to the next was excellent – smooth and crisp with no gaps and no collisions in the wings that we could see!

MUSICAL DIRECTION

The preparation for so many musical numbers was a huge task, and most of the chorus numbers had first-class harmonies, performed with considerable skill. All the numbers had recorded accompaniment and the gathering together of all this material and working out appropriate harmonies was a great accomplishment.

There was good variety in the style of accompaniment from big band sound to a quiet underscoring, but we felt that some of the numbers were over-long and repetitive rhythms became a little trying. It was interesting that you played some of the children's numbers at such a low pitch, but it worked well and they weren't straining their voices. Their diction was always clear and most of them knew their words and kept smiling.

The cast seemed to have had some difficulty with the tuning in 'Little things mean a lot' and 'True Colours' – it may be that the chorus could not hear the accompaniment to the quieter numbers very clearly. The inclusion of the excellent violin soloist was delightful, and there were some excellent solo performers in 'Don't laugh at me', 'Try', 'Fashionista', 'In Crowd', 'See beneath you're beautiful' and 'I am what I am'.

'Father and Son' and 'Love that lets go' were very good duets with sincere feeling evident, and each chorus number was well prepared – those with girls only and with men only being delivered with as much energy and vitality as the big choruses. Numbers which stood out for us were 'Wonderful World/Rainbow', 'Georgy Girl' and 'Sing a Rainbow' in the first half, 'Fashionista' and 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion', 'Pretty Woman', 'Price Tag', 'Tail Feather' and 'Who we are' from the men, and 'Big Girls' and 'All about the Bass' from the girls – in the second half.

'Purple Ladies' was a great performance, and we'd like to hear/see that again ! and 'Older Ladies' was great fun. 'We could have been Anything' and 'Wonderful World' were great numbers to finish the evening, along with your tribute to Basil Tait 'Back in the old Routine'.

DANCE DIRECTION

Every number was enhanced by really good choreography by all – good arms and feet movement, crisp and well rehearsed. 'Big Girls' was a great number by two men in drag, and there was slick and smooth movement in the first-class exercise class. Other items that stood out for us were 'Happy' and 'Hall of Fame', 'Fashionista' and 'Follower of Fashion'. 'Putting on the Ritz' was good, and 'Tail Feather' and 'Who we are' were all very well performed by the men. 'We could have been anything' was a fine finale.

CONTENT

SECTION ONE: the early stage of life was appropriately introduced by a gentle “We’ve only just begun” followed by fine harmonies in ‘Colour my World’. ‘Friends’ and ‘Mean’ from the children were well performed, telling of childhood problems, and ‘Father and Son’ was a moving number. The signing in ‘Wonderful World’ was well done, and ‘Rainbow’ and ‘When you’re smiling’ were also good numbers, the latter including a first-class young violinist, and – I think – the first red dress. The ukulele player gave us an extra dimension to the musical performances – a jolly addition. ‘Party Dress’ was a very good finish to this section; it was a terrific comedy number and we saw marvellous facial expressions.

SECTION TWO: the teen years and family life were depicted by a good choice of numbers. ‘Love that lets Go’ was an especially moving number from two performers who are real-life mother and son, and another parent child relationship was well portrayed by ‘Ready Set Don’t Go’. ‘True Colours’ included a splendid rap interlude from a young man! ‘Wild One’ illustrated a familiar aspect of teenage years. ‘Sing a Rainbow’ was well delivered by the children to conclude this section.

SECTION THREE: the emphasis moved to the performing adults in this section and ‘Fashionista’ was a rousing start, beautifully performed by the lead singer and company. A delightful Towel Dance provided a few minutes of great fun, and the item was performed with considerable skill; so much rehearsal must have gone into this act. The ‘Mutual Admiration Society’ was fun. Many numbers gave members of the company their solo moment on the stage, and the chorus was consistently excellent in its support. We loved the third very funny number in this section – ‘Big Girls’.

SECTION FOUR: this section concentrating on the later years of one’s life opened with the show-stopping number ‘Purple Ladies’ – a cleverly conceived take on Jenny Joseph’s wonderful poem. ‘I am what I am’ was another stunning number, and the show concluded with two rousing choruses

ENDEAVOUR, ORIGINALITY AND ATTAINMENT

This was a first-class evening’s entertainment, if a little long. The huge amount of work put into preparing so many numbers was well appreciated by the audience and enjoyed very much. The theme and messages in the numbers chosen helped in the continuity of the show and everyone must be congratulated in bringing it to the stage.

(We feel we must mention that we saw no reference to chaperones in your programme, and wonder whether your company is complying with the legal requirements governing children on the stage.)

It was good to be with you again, Mawgan Porth, and thank you for inviting the CDA and looking after us so well. We appreciated the good seats and most especially the list of songs you gave us !

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sally.robinson13@btinternet.com