

## **HÄGAR THE HORRIBLE – THE MUSICAL**

### **Noarlunga Theatre Company**

Arts Centre, Port Noarlunga

Until April 30

Review by Simon Slade

Take one of the world's best loved comic strips, add music, put it on stage, and it should be a recipe for a great night out.

Take an experienced director, and some fine performers, and the final result should be an evening of seamless hilarity.

Noarlunga Theatre Company's production of "Hagar the Horrible" is both of these things some of the time.

The very experienced Ron Hughes is a good choice as Hägar, using his comic abilities well. He is teamed nicely with Sue Oldknow, who is a likeable and funny Helga. Director John Fitzpatrick has cast well, utilising the physical comedy of the multi-talented Cherylene O'Brien as Hamlet, Lars, and an hilarious French waiter.

The energy and considerable talent of Rob Ellinger, as Bjorn, keeps the Viking marauders together through some of the more difficult song and dance sections. He is a real highlight in the male cast.

Wade Shiell is very funny as the luckless Lucky Eddie, Hägar's right-hand-man who makes up for his lack of brains with unswerving loyalty.

Maggie Smith gets a lot of laughs in her great cameo as Mrs Begonia, and is responsible for the costumes too, which are very good. Hamlet's outfit and wig get laughs of their own!

The music is sequenced and the performers do well with their cues in the absence of a musical director.

The cabaret seating works well in the excellent Arts Centre, and creates a very friendly environment.

The script is funny, the actors carry it off well, but from a staging and technical point of view, the show needs to move at a faster pace. Some of the problems begin with the writing, because the script includes no less than fourteen scenes in Act I alone. Add a house curtain that takes fifteen seconds to close and another fifteen to open, and you have a recipe for some long scene changes. This was particularly noticeable where no set change was needed, and the scene change could have been achieved with a simple blackout. Better use of the upstage curtain to cover scene changes would have helped too.

This was a pity, because the pace of the show was otherwise good.