

JEKYLL AND HYDE – THE MUSICAL

Hills Musical Company

Stirling Community Theatre

Until April 30

Review by Stephanie Johnson

“Jekyll and Hyde, the Musical” is a strange concoction – a portion of philosophy, a dash of dancing and a good dose of darkness mixed with emotive music.

Scots author Robert Louis Stevenson wrote the original strange and sinister story, on which the musical is based. The story has been adapted for stage by Steve Cuden and Frank Wildhorn.

“Jekyll and Hyde” encompasses huge concepts – the duality of the human condition, good versus evil and the need to see beyond social façade.

This story has touched such a deep note in the human psyche that “Jekyll and Hyde” has become a common expression to describe the duality of a person’s nature.

Capturing this deep and moving message is a challenge well met by the Hills Musical Company.

The company has pulled together to create a cohesive and professional production that showcases the original story and the music by Frank Wildhorn.

The set is designed well for the many scene changes, the lighting is top-notch and the costumes appropriately colourful and dowdy when required.

However, the linchpin for this story and the production is the main character – Dr Henry Jekyll and his shadow Edward Hyde. Chris Buhagiar is exceptional in the central role. He portrays the driving forces of both the ethical Dr Henry Jekyll and the evil Edward Hyde, as well as the tension of the duality and the agony of the ultimate conclusion.

Director Michael Pole and choreographer Sue Pole have done a commendable job of ensuring that each member of this ensemble supports and enhances the main tenet of the story.

Michelle Nightingale, as the love-interest Emma Carew and Mark Oates as lawyer John Utterson give standout performances.

Gerard Ryan as the Bishop of Basingstroke, Simon Holdback as Simon Stride and John Pfitzner as Sir Danvers Carew also ably hold their own in both singing and acting.

Megan Humphries is a delight as Lady Beaconsfield creating some much welcome comic relief.

Annie Slade looks fabulous, but somehow struggles to reveal the raunchiness of the luckless Lucy.

The story is dark with touches of light, but the music is truly beautiful. Musical Directors Ross Curtis and Leith Pederick have shown how music has the power to affect the emotions.

This is a production that stimulates rather than titillates – a potent potion.