

The Addams Family Musical

Date	7 th April 2019
Society	St Austell AOS
Venue	Keay Theatre
Type of Production	Musical
Director	Kathy West
Musical Director	Vicky Pascoe
Choreographer	Jess Madeley

The Addams Family Musical is one of the new ones available to the amateur stage only being released for production since 2014. The story is based around, Wednesday Addams, who has fallen in love with a normal boy!! She begs her family to act 'normal' at a family dinner she has arranged with the purpose of announcing their engagement. This scenario is not possible and the following comedy and strange incidents occur as a result.

Arriving at the theatre the audience were presented with a variety of macabre effects. Bones sat on tables, cobwebs hung from the ceiling and a covered photo board showed images of the cast. This was a clever touch to get you prepared for the evening's entertainment.

From the moment you sit down you are drawn into the character of the musical. The open stage displayed an excellent atmospheric set as would be expected from Andy Martin with suitable mood lighting. We were looking at the outside of the Addams family home with its iron gates, family crypt, and numerous gravestones set in two acres in the middle of Central Park.

The lights dim and on stomps the impressive character of Lurch, he proceeded to remind the audience of the consequences of using their mobile phones. He then began the iconic Addams Family clicking which all those who remember the show from the 1960's and subsequent reincarnations known as the theme music. Thing appears in the center of the stage and begins to conduct the overture. The gates open and there stand the family and the story begins.

Kathy West obviously worked with all areas of the team to produce such a slick well drilled show; the cast were well rehearsed transitioning from one scene to another seamlessly. The ensemble moved between small groups and they were engaged in the in the action on stage. The funny lines and events from the script were well emphasized.

The excellent make up and costumes identified each of the principal characters who all played their roles exactly as expected and were a pleasure to watch. We were then introduced to the ancestors all individuals who were decked out in different, period costumes; my one little reservation was that I would have liked the showman to have a white tailcoat; it was interesting trying to work out which era they were representing. All those make up workshops also paid off the make-up was outstanding and true to character.

As mentioned before Andy Martin's stage set is always impressive. The initial outdoor scene opened up to the spooky interior of the Addams house, with moveable stairs, a torture chamber and a bed which the set seems to eat. This was enhanced by additional furniture and a variety of props; I particularly liked Fester's rocket, the monster hand under the bed, Fester on the moon and the yellow bird, but I think heavier glasses would have been an advantage. The quick and seamless transitions between scenes were all provided by the cast and were hardly noticeable and didn't distract your attention from the production. The use of the lever at the front of the stage to go between scenes was cleverly used.

The lighting and sound plots were expertly devised and presented and took the production to another level. The lighting changes added atmosphere to the various scenes and the quality sound production meant that the balance of the radio microphones ensured that every word could be heard.

It is always great to be able to have a live orchestra and under the direction of Vicky Pascoe this one was top class. The songs were sung at a good pace and the principals and ensemble were well-rehearsed and confident but some more male voices would have added depth and warmth to the ensemble numbers.

Creating dance routines for a large cast could give the choreographer problems but Jess Madeley certainly came up trumps. 'When You're an Addams' and 'Full Disclosure' were brilliant with every member of the team working well together. All the numbers were well rehearsed with challenging routines; I especially enjoyed the ballet 'The Moon and Me' with Uncle Fester. The choreographed moves to transport the wedding bouquet and the arrow were inspired; what flexible dancers you have!

All the principals were extremely well cast and immersed themselves in their respective characters. The couples Gomez (Adam Clarke) and Morticia (Karen Clarke), Wednesday (Erin Waller) and Lucas and Mal (Craig Munday) and Alice (Tara Davin) were well matched and created believable partnerships. Gomez the suave sophisticated head of the household held is accent throughout the show and he handled his difficult songs with ease, his eye contact with the audience drew them in emotionally. Morticia his 'Cara Mia' looked and moved as expected, she played her part convincingly and her singing was of a high standard. Wednesday was a whirlwind of anger, love and confusion, she was ideal for the role and her singing was exceptional. Pugsley (Bex Rogers) having a woman play the role did not detract from the character, she sang well and you could not help but empathize with her worries. The part of the incontinent Grandma, or was she? (Georgina Walkey), felt like

it was written for her, what fantastic dancing and singing for someone over 100. Uncle Fester (Conrad Lobb) I feel this actor needs a special mention, he inhabited the role and made it his own. His make-up was brilliant and he maintained an almost comic book persona throughout the show demonstrating every emotion. Lurch (Andi Shacklady) portrayed the character with gravitas, his facial expressions and grunts were awesome and it was great at the end to hear his voice. Lucas was a very over the top character, he sang well, his armography enhanced the numbers. Mal's accent was believable; he sang well and his polar opposite change was handled well. Alice played the under the thumb wife well with her rhyming couplets tripping off her tongue but the transition after drinking the drug was wonderful. Ensemble, all were believable with their different personalities but certain characters caught your eye, the young evacuee with the giggle always drew your attention, Marie Antoinette's expression when she was used as a coat rack and the Victorian maid's knitting which kept growing.

This was a wonderful production; which I enjoyed; all parts of the team performed well there were no weak areas. The whole company should be proud. Many congratulations to all involved.