

Last Night I Dreamt Of...

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Review by Claire Taranaski.

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Our latest review below and on our website (a few days later than planned as couldn't make the first night and internet problems but we think it is worth the wait) is of [Croft House Theatre Company](#) Rock Of Ages at the Lyceum until Saturday 22 March.

"Rock Of Ages is a musical like non-other than I have seen before, and trust me I have seen a lot, balancing rock music, adult themes and comedy, including brilliantly making fun of the genre itself, which makes it even more impressive that even a great amateur company can produce a completely faultless performance of it, which would not be out of place on a professional nationwide tour or in a West End theatre, but that's just what Croft House Theatre Company did.

Regular readers of our reviews will know that Adam Walker, who plays Drew Boley, is one of the best performers on the Sheffield musical theatre scene and continues to be in this performance whilst additionally proving he can look nothing like you expect and also hilariously make fun of both the genre and himself as a performer. And unlike some stars he also knows it not all about him and led the way for two of his co-stars to match and at times surpass his star in this performance.

First up, Tom Fox-Owens was a comedic genius as bar manager and narrator Lonny Barnett stealing the show with every line and every t-shirt (they missed a trick not selling these in the foyer) whilst having great stage presence and charisma with the cast and the audience. If there was an award for best musical narrator of all time it would be his. His bromance duet with Mark Holmes as bar manager Dennis Dupree "Can't Fight This Feeling" was one of my stand-out musical numbers of the night for it's comedy, chemistry, spoofing of classic dance numbers and perfectly timed use of a smoke machine.

Secondly, Grace Hadabora as Drew's love interest, and so much more than that, Sherrie Christian, who has returned to Sheffield after university and based on this performance we want to keep her, though if she gets a West End part or record contract off the back of this we will not be surprised. Like Adam, Grace has everything you need to be a stand out theatre star including incredible stage presence, confidence, chemistry with co-stars, moves and voice. Her routine on "I Hate Myself For Loving You" makes all women want her on speed dial when men cause them wrong and her duet with Adam on "The Search Is Over" is that perfect love song fans look for in every musical. Grace we can't wait to see what you do next.

Other cast members who deserve a mention include James Smith as rocker Stacey Jaxx who embodied the sex and drugs of the rock and roll lifestyle; Tara Kulbatski as Regina (rhymes with Vagina) Koontz who made me think of another famous 80s secretary (Ghostbusters Janine Melintz) but with the added advantage of being able to sing; and Matt Bevan as Franz Kleinemann (I couldn't get the image of a German camp "Stath Lets Flats" out my head). Tara and Matt also possessed the ability to rock 80s aerobics gear with confidence.

On the subject of rocking 80s gear with confidence, Rock Of Ages is also a superb celebration of body confidence and the cast and ensemble (as waitresses, dancers and strippers) possessed this in spades. A stand out of these was Jazmine Womack as Waitress #1, who showed like Tracey the barmaid in Eastenders, that bar staff are important, all knowing and a friend to everyone.

A big mention must go to the rock band who were on stage throughout and added to the rock club feel of the show, the flexible set with pull out rooms that captured the rock club feel, the grime of public toilets and the glamour of Justice Charlier's office (Helen Green your duet with Grace "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" was another of my many stand out musical performances).

Big thanks must also go to director and choreographer Claire Harriott, who got the best out of the entire cast, the stage and the auditorium, with choreography that was crisp and faultless whilst also capturing the energy of being at a live rock gig and inside a strip club, and musical director Matt Symonds, who brought to life powerful musical performances throughout, with clever harmonies and over laying all the way through to sing and clap along "Don't Stop Believing" finale.

This is a musical that can be watched again and again (there were definitely repeat attenders in the audience as I heard the delighted likes of "I forgot that part" from people around me) and should not be missed by fans of musicals, theatrical comedy and rock and 80s music fans who think they don't like musicals. Whether you are new to the show or already a fan Croft House Theatre Company's production should not be missed."

