



Be inspired by amateur theatre

**Tenterden Operatic & Dramatic Society**  
**'9 – 5' Music & Lyrics by Dolly Parton**  
**The Sinden Theatre, Tenterden**  
**Saturday Matinee 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023**  
**Director: Louisa Nelson Chambers**  
**Musical Director: Ian Harby with Vocal Coach: Christine Descher**

The 9 – 5 work ethic is well known to most of us although much has changed since Covid. This musical is set in 1979 an era of chauvinism at its height nowadays not so acceptable. A funny story, dislike to friendship that culminates into an unlikely fantasy, a humiliating kidnap of bully, chauvinist boss Franklin Hart whilst loyal devoted lovesick Roz Keith is side-tracked and packed off to take French lessons! Three very different women – Violet is head Secretary disgruntled at no senior promotion, Doralee – boss Hart's PA is disliked by her workmates 'don't judge a book by its cover' country girl, and inexperienced newbie never worked before Judy give their workplace a makeover taking control of the company Consolidated. Some inventive bookkeeping is discovered and after a joint smoking interval a plan is hatched to kidnap Hart. Bigwig CEO Russell arrives for an inspection and to their surprise reacts favourably to the new regime. Hart is sent off to deepest Bolivia and the ladies take permanent control. True girl power.

Good character casting of the four principal female roles with tall upright efficient Violet played by Louise Franklin, Jess Leaper with her long blond curls and body-hugging short dresses and very high heels disliked by her workmates is country girl Doralee. Judy the newbie, just separated from her husband is played elegantly by Rebecca Woollard, whilst Siana Weston has the wonderful comedy part of Roz Keith the memo queen. All four great characters with strong singing voices too. Sexist, egotistical Franklin was well interpreted by Michael Fitzgerald as lead male role, whilst his wife Kay played the lovely cameo role of Margaret a dizzy lush who is sent for rehab, who managed her steps and words together beautifully!

Dylan Bryan played likeable Joe, eventually teaming up with Violet, Stuart Swift made a welcome debut having never performed on stage before – commendable, whilst Stuart Collier stepped into the breach playing Dwayne, and last appearing as a Vicar in 'Confusion'. Colin Barnes appeared as Russell Tinsworthy the company big cheese. The dancers with excellent choreography set and danced by Chrissie Smith were well co-ordinated both in interesting movement and costume, and together with other well played cameo roles the whole cast gelled beautifully.

Musically - very strong toe tapping melodies, good harmony – with mics not always fully functional which was a pity and with the sizable band including two keyboards, and three brass felt it was overpowering to the point my ears were ringing.

Peter Huxley always inventive with sets produced easily moveable simple effective pictures using black back drop and sides but depicting the scenes and with slick changeovers worked very well indeed. I particularly liked the office bookcase with the library steps that Violet used so adeptly. The central lift between curtains, the office bull pen with three rolling desks very good as well as the washroom, the hospital trolley, and the Xerox episode was a hoot – paper spewing everywhere. Props were plentiful arranged by Marion Woolley also taking the part of Kathy.

Lighting was well designed – good effects especially for the branding scene – such a shame the spot failed for Roz and her very French entry.

The costumes provided by the cast were just perfect – loved the sparkling trouser suit worn by Violet – dancers in black with splashes of bright colour, Doralee in her body hugging dresses and those gorgeous red high heels.

Louisa was in her element with such a production to get her teeth into and with her lovely cast despite difficulties with illness along the way gave the audience a real good feel atmosphere, and enjoyable, slick afternoon's entertainment. Thank you to you all, front and backstage for all your hard work.

A shortened report will appear on the SE NODA Website shortly.

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