



David Gauci and Davine Productions
Beautiful, The Carole King Musical

Reviewed by Alan Shepley, Theatre Association of S.A. July 8, 2021

Each time I have the fortune to attend a David Gauci/Davine production I leave the theatre wondering if he can (at least) repeat the entertainment quality I've just been treated to. And each time he does! 'Beautiful – the Carole King Musical' ticks all the boxes in order to be simply sensational. Davine's consistent success is centred on a team with myriad skills who have the capacity to deliver a project with an enviable range of production values.

Musical director, Peter Johns, and his vibrant musical ensemble produce a sumptuous sound. The music alone is a befitting anthem for the era. Coupled with an excellent sound system allowing the total musical package to wash over us, it is sheer nostalgic indulgence. Lighting plot by designer Tim Bates is spot on! Our focus is deftly directed throughout whether to a specific piece of the set, an individual performer, or to a group/chorus.

Costuming by Louise Watkins and Renee Brice so redolent of the 60s and 70s suits the ambience of the play to perfection. Shenayde Wilkinson-Sarti's choreographic touch is most evident in the simple yet effective routines of 'The Shirelles' and 'The Drifters'. She provides an obvious influence in guiding the movement of the play.

The use of the performance area is quite holistic with all entries and exits in tune with the ebb and flow of the narrative. Stage manager, Gavin Cianci, and assistant Emma Hamilton ensure that set changes are both subtle and seamless. It is an excellent effort from all back-stage. The pace of the piece does not miss a beat.

And the cast? What a superbly talented ensemble. Each cast member's enjoyment and involved participation is palpable. You make your audience smile! Even though I was a big 'Righteous Brothers' fan I am loathe to pinpoint any of the individual or group numbers. You are all so flawlessly good! Jemma McCulloch (Carole

King), Trevor Anderson (Gerry Goffin), Maya Miller (Cynthia Weil) and Joshua Kerr (Barry Mann) generously share their prodigious talents. As a team, or as individual performers, their combined theatrical and vocal skills are just astounding. Their timing is impeccable, in sync both between themselves and with the music provided by MD Peter Johns. With more than able support from Brendan Cooney as Donnie Kirshner, and wise matriarchal advice from Kate Anolak as Carole's mother, Genie Klein, Carole King's tale is well told.

I must make comment on the performance of Jemma McCulloch as Carole King. She simply holds her audience in thrall throughout, whether as a lively, naive teen setting out on life's adventure, or as a mature, iconic, individual performer in her own right. Jemma simply 'brings it all back' for each and every member of the audience. For a couple of hours she IS Carole King.

David Gauci has delivered a piece of priceless musical theatre. Right on cue. Wonderful, simply wonderful!