



NICK BRANNAM  
DIRECTOR | CHOREOGRAPHER

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PRODUCTION	<i>Guys and Dolls</i>
COMPANY	Basingstoke Amateur Theatrical Society
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As we took our seats the first impression of the *Guys and Dolls* set with its towering skyscrapers, stairway and shop fronts it really set the mood.

Director and choreographer Ray Jeffrey used the overture to create a bustling street scene, with the whole cast in black and white – a classy touch, and soon we were into the action and the costumes turned to colour. *Guys and Dolls* is drawn from two short stories by Damon Runyon, and we met loveable thugs and their long-suffering dolls and the Salvation Army preaching against the evils of drink.

Nathan Detroit ran the 'oldest established permanent floating crap game' in New York and he was desperately seeking a place to play while simultaneously striving to keep his fiancé of 14 years from becoming his wife!

Martin Webb was very comfortable and excellent in his role as Nathan Detroit and Stephen Westwood, as career gambler Sky Masterton, was also impressive, with great vocals and presence. Missionary Sergeant, Sarah Brown was in the experienced and talented hands of Theresa Lunn who gave an immaculate performance. Heading up the Hot Box Girls was Liz Illett as Adelaide and she had a ball in her comedy role.

The various gamblers all gave great performances, although I didn't care for Harry the Horse's constant 'neighing' dialogue (a good idea) but it palled in the end for me. Highlights were *Luck Be a Lady* and *Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat*, led by David Scanlan as Nicely-Nicely Johnson.

Sound Balance was excellent and the chorus, dancers and the Salvation Army group did a terrific job. The orchestra, under the baton of Musical Director Neil Streeter, excellently and sympathetically accompanied the musical numbers.

This was a very good production, with strong principals, good chorus work, and it all looked fabulous with the impressive set and lovely costumes. However, despite all these excellent ingredients, a little something was missing for me. Perhaps it was a lacking in atmosphere due to the (I felt) rather old fashioned lighting plot, or lacking in pace at times. None the less,

congratulations on bringing this favourite to the stage in a highly entertaining production that sent the audience home very happy.

Trevor Dobson