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DIRECTOR | CHOREOGRAPHER

PRODUCTION	<i>Singin' in the Rain</i>
COMPANY	Basingstoke Amateur Theatrical Society
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To celebrate their 60th year BATS chose the ever popular *Singin' in the Rain*, the story of the arrival of the talkies in Hollywood. It was told with great wit and humour and provided a great framework for BATS to showcase their considerable talents in a production packed with a host of sparkling musical numbers and gorgeous costumes.

Make no mistake – this is a very difficult musical to stage, calling on the old style musical theatre skills and staging challenges. BATS did not disappoint – and the cast danced and sang their socks off and the title number was performed on a wet set complete with rain and gushing drain pipes - incredible.

As the silent movie idol Don Lockwood, Bryn Hughes was splendid, with his winning smile and cheeky confidence and his sidekick Cosmo Brown was uber-energetically portrayed by newcomer William Keel-Stocker, in an impressive debut to the society. Also making her BATS debut was the fabulously voiced Anneka Wass (Kathy Selden). The three worked well together especially in their challenging routines and Kirsty Bennett as Lina Lamont absolutely nailed the character with her nails-on-blackboard voice and brought great humour to the role.

An excellent ensemble backed the principals and there were many truly memorable moments: *Beautiful Girl*, *Good Mornin'*, *Singin' in the Rain* and *Broadway Melody* to name a few. The demands of the principal dancing meant some of the routines were not quite as slick as I would have expected – but still excellent and impressive.

The silent movie style projections were fantastic and director Ray Jeffery and musical director Trevor Defferd got the utmost from the cast, and choreographers Julie Morris and Karen McCloy created some sumptuous, sizzling and well rehearsed routines. Costumes were amazing in their style (and number of changes) and the lighting and special effects (wind, rain, dry ice – you name it!) were terrific. All in all this provided a great spectacle to delight the audience and good old fashioned entertainment.

Trevor Dobson