

Delightful Oliver

Review of EODS' production of Oliver! at the Congress Theatre by Laura Sonier.

THERE would have been none of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's infamous gurning if he had been in the audience on the opening night of EODS' Oliver!

'The Lord' is known for his making his feelings perfectly clear about the performances of the would-be Nancys and Olivers on the BBC show I'd Do Anything. But he would surely have been left with a smile — rather than a grimace — on his face after the curtain fell at the Congress.

There is plenty of energy, enthusiasm and emotion from the young — and not so young — cast. The eponymous Oliver is played by Charlie Carr, who delivers plenty of sweetness — both vocally and in his performance — and the requisite sadness as the orphan who dares to ask for more.

Samantha Summerbell is superbly fun and feisty as the tragic Nancy, Oliver Taplin has plenty of cheeky swagger as the Artful Dodger, Guy Pymble oozes menace as Bill Sykes and Keith Smith brings both avidity and pathos to his role as Fagin.

The other roles are also delivered with aplomb: Clem Jackson and Jane Brittain-James as Mr Bumble and Widow Corney, Gordon Ferguson and Catherine Pymble as the sinister Sowerberrys, Leah Jensen as Charlotte, Tim Clay as Noah Claypole, Ellen Booth as Bet, Kath Clarke as Mrs Bedwin, Christopher Metcalfe as Mr Brownlow, Stan Fillery as Dr Grimwigg and Mandy Groves as Old Sal.

The show is directed with a sure hand by James Bell, with Andy Gill as musical director and Teresa Smith as choreographer.