



REVIEW:	Wed 19th June 2013	DIRECTOR:	Morven Rae
VENUE:	Oxted Barn Theatre	MD:	Robert Randall
SHOW:	Love Story	CHOREOGRAPHER:	Tamsin Reeve

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The beautiful Howard Goodall score to Love Story achieves the almost impossible iconic level of delight that that original film it is based on did, almost from the very first bar. It is simply one of the most evocative and touchingly melody rich pieces of musical theatre scoring that I have ever had the pleasure to enjoy. I was lucky enough to be invited by my friend Peter Polycarpou to see him play Phil Cavilleri brilliantly in the premiere at the Minerva Theatre, Chichester and like, it seems, everyone since I immediately fell in love with the piece. The Stephen Clark book reflects and captures the original feel of the Erich Segal story and while the latter died in January 2010 just month before the musical opened I just know that he would have been the first on his feet to applaud the adaptation. So, Good Company were very fortunate to begin with delightful material, but boy did they capitalise on it. Simply put this was an outstanding production, excelling in all areas. Morven Rae and assistants Paul Grace and Tamsin Reeve had clearly spent hours fine tuning every detail of this chamber musical to ensure clever minimal black box staging flowed effortlessly from scene to scene delightfully lit by Alan Bishop and stage managed by Alan Matthews. The use of the ensemble cast to not only nobly cover the many vocal harmonies perfectly but also to assist manoeuvring the props based set with highly entertaining choreographic precision, certainly rivalled any professional attempt at similar I have witnessed.

If you have had the opportunity to enjoy this show yourself you will know that the vast majority of the acting and vocal duties fall to the two principal characters Jenny Cavilleri [played by Beci Sageman] and Oliver Barrett IV [Chris Watson]. Beci and Chris not only communicated the characters delightfully and the sung word equally beautifully, they also made it look so effortlessly real, drawing the audience into the escape of that complete emersion that we all aim for. The entire company, seven piece orchestra and MD Robert Randall are to be congratulated on an almost entirely flawless reproduction of the score, delivered so clearly thanks to the slick sound engineering skills of Barn resident sound engineer John Chinnoock. A final highlight was Peter St James delivery of Phil, which I know that originator PP himself would have highly approved of.

I don't believe I have ever said this in a review before but it was so thoroughly enjoyable that if I had another free evening during the run I would have returned to see the production again!

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