

# ROMEO & JULIET

*Julie Eagleton at the Barbican (Pit)*

Pre-war Italy is the setting for *Romeo And Juliet* under the direction of Michael Attenborough. The male characters are all dressed in working class clothes of the day, cloth caps, braces and sturdy bulky boots and the females in shawls and long flowing dresses. The costumes are not as regal as in some productions, no gilt or colourful brocade here, but they are surprisingly incidental due to the powerful, commanding performances.

Ray Fearon plays a charismatic Romeo with impeccable delivery of the verse, showing maturity much beyond his years. Zoe Waites plays Juliet and gives a commendable performance but her voice doesn't vary as much as it should and so some lines lacked conviction as a result. The two leading players both possess

the essential ingredient for the success of this particular play and that is passion. They produce real electricity which fires the production along at a forceful pace.

The setting is sparse, with a wall of rock providing the backdrop and a centrally raised square which acts as a stage within a stage. The all important balcony is a simple affair, jutting

## BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

<i>Director</i>	Michael Attenborough
<i>Designer</i>	Robert Jones
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Tim Mitchell
<i>Music</i>	Stephen Warbeck
<i>Movement</i>	Terry John Bates
<i>Fights</i>	Terry King
<i>Sound</i>	John A Leonard

out of the rock face, complete with a solitary, symbolic red rose plant. Here Juliet delivers one of the plays most famous soliloquies, adding lines such as 'I have forgot why I called thee back', comically emphasising her smitten state in the presence of Romeo.

There are many comic touches throughout, several revolving around Juliet's nurse, wonderfully played by Sandra Voe. When she first meets Mercutio she throws off her shawl, revealing an ample cleavage, and Mercutio is portrayed here as a talented mimic and practical joker. None of these deviations from the original verse weaken the production but rather add to it. □

*Music Director*      **Stephen Owens**

*Cast*      **Neil Phillips, Neil Phillips, Chook Sibtain, Oliver Fox, Louis Mahoney, Sandra Clark, Ray Fearon, Lawrence Wood, Jack Tanner, David Lyon, Jan Chappell, Zoe Waites, Nigel Clauzel, Sandra Voe, Russell Layton, Amanda Perry-Smith, Jo Keating, Richard Cordery**

# SWEET CHARITY

To mount a production of *Sweet Charity* on a shoestring budget, with just a three piece band, takes some courage but the English Theatre have pulled it off. As the company cannot afford to employ actors, singers and dancers, the performers must be able to do all three, extending even to the male lead, Phil Corbitt (who plays Oscar) joining the band to double up as a saxophonist when not acting on stage. As this show needs the sound of a real jazz band, two of the musicians were recruited from the musical *Ain't Misbehavin'* and the right sound is achieved as a result. Artistic Director, Judith Rosenbauer, is renowned for the standard of productions which she brings to this English speaking theatre and here, once again, the standard is high.

Amanda Villamayor is perfectly cast as Charity. It is difficult to believe that this is her debut in a professional musical. Her theme tune throughout *If They Could See Me Now* is delivered with gusto and she is a good dancer too, but it is her exceptional use of facial expressions to convey emotions and her beaming smile which make her the star of the show. Charity works as a hostess at the Fan Dango Ballroom, New

JULIE EAGLETON AT THE ENGLISH  
THEATRE, FRANKFURT

York, and has no luck with boyfriends, meeting louse after louse. Her luck seems to change when she meets romantic movie-star Vittorio Vidal and spends the night at his apartment. When he turns out to be an even bigger louse, she sets her sights on evening classes to improve herself and there she meets a fellow student, Oscar, with whom she embarks on a romance. Complications arise when he inquires about her career, as he thinks that she works in a bank.

*Hey Big Spender* and *The Rhythm Of Life* are the two big company numbers and even though 11 people are on the tiny stage, they never seem cramped, using every inch of the space to good effect.

Since its 1966 Broadway debut, *Sweet Charity* has been one of the best loved Neil Simon musicals and the German audience adored this production. After its run in Frankfurt, it will be coming to the Queens Theatre, Hornchurch where hopefully it will be viewed with the same enthusiasm by an English audience. □

BOOK BY NEIL SIMON  
MUSIC BY CY COLEMAN  
LYRICS BY DOROTHY FIELDS  
BASED ON AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY  
BY FEDERICO FELINI, TULLIO PINELLI  
AND ENNIO ELAIANO  
CONCEIVED, STAGED AND  
CHOREOGRAPHED BOB FOSSE

DIRECTOR	MARC URQUHART
CHOREOGRAPHER	ADRIAN ALLSOPP
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	WARREN WILLS
SET DESIGNER	DIETER STEGMANN
COSTUME DESIGNER	ULLA ROHRS
LIGHTING DESIGNER	ED CLARKE
CAST	JOSHUA BANCEL, PHILIP CORBITT, ANNABELLE DALLING, LEON FERGUSON, SHELAAGH FERRELL, EMMA FRANCIS, PAUL HAZEL, VANESSA LEAG-HICKS, JAKE McCABE, REBECCA ROSENBAUER, AMANDA VILLAMAYOR

GERMANY...