

A CELEBRATION OF THE MODERN MUSICAL (2)

1993

ENTERTAINMENT

Teddington Theatre Club

Here's to the next time

IT *should* run and run. But eat your heart out whoever missed **A Celebration of the Modern Musical (2)** in aid of the Teddington Theatre Club's New Theatre Appeal - it had its last performance at Hampton Court Theatre on Saturday.

Two girls: Kim Allen, Cathy Early, three guys: Jon Durbridge, Peter Barnett and Mike Kneller, plus four extraordinarily talented musicians: musical director John Davies, keyboard, Robin Goddard, percussion, Manuel Sardina, lead guitar, Paul Stevens saxophone and clarinet, combined to make this show a stunning success.

From the opening *Five Guys Named Moe* to the closing *Elvis the Musical* the combo demonstrated their incredible versatility with sometimes witty, sometimes relaxed, sometimes raucous, sometimes

heart-stopping, but always impressive timing and sheer professionalism.

Kim Allen, who also produced the show, must be tired of being likened to a certain Andrew Lloyd Webber leading lady, but her deceptively simple way with songs like *Come back with the same look in your eyes (Tell Me on a Sunday)* and *I'd give my life for you (Miss Saigon)* is all her own.

Cathy Early gives a touching vulnerability to an all too familiar song like *Tell me on a Sunday* and makes it fresh and new. She also manages to bring an earthy quality and a great Liverpool accent to Marilyn Munroe from *Blood Brothers*.

Comedy is Jon Durbridge's forte with *Messy Bessy* from *Five Guys* but he manages pathos too in *Parlez vous Francais?* from *Aspects* and toughness for *Telephone Song* in *Miss Saigon*.

Sondheim is a challenge for most singers but not Peter Barnett. His *Losing my mind* from *Follies* was masterly and he pulled the heartstrings with *Bring him home* from *Les Miz*, prompting the whispered reaction 'He can be my romantic lead any day' from a lady in the audience.

What to say about Mike Kneller? As a link man he is pleasantly witty. Given a song and a mike he smoulders dangerously. After exploding onto the stage with Early in the morning from *Five Guys* he disappeared from the action till *Miss Saigon*, *Blood Brothers* and *Les Miz* and finally brought the house down with his *Elvis*.

There were prolonged and resounding cheers for musicians and cast till, reluctantly, the Friday night audience let them go. Here's to the next time!

Jenny Scott

Rush Theatre