

## Be More Chill Show Feedback

There were 22 responses overall; 12 cast members, 5 production team members, 3 audience members, 1 tech crew member and 1 band member.

### **Direction**

Overall there was a lot of praise for Alex and Lizzy's direction. Many cast members commented on how enthusiastic and passionate Alex was about the project and liked how he had a 'clear vision of how the show should look'. One commented on how the direction style gave them 'a lot of freedom' and they liked that they could 'put their own spin' on their character. Cast members also appreciated Alex's energy, especially when entering the green room after performances and they liked his waves of pride. High praise was also given to Lizzy as AD. One cast member commented saying 'her keen eye and lovely presence always helped us as a cast'. Others said they worked well as a team and that the AD was confident. Other general cast comments said that the directors were patient and approachable, the teaching was clear and the rehearsal schedule was clear.

Production team members echoed most of these comments saying that 'Alex was clearly excited for this project' and 'his sense of pride was really encouraging to the whole team.' Again, there was high praise for Lizzy from the prod team with people saying 'Ultimately she was just fab and any of you would be lucky to have her as a director in the future' and 'She excelled during ILYB and did well exploring character with the ensemble.'

Audience members said the direction was 'dynamic, fun, captured the spirit of the production' and 'the squipps direction was very effective'.

The one tech response said 'The acting in this show was phenomenal, it was so well cast and you guys have obviously done a lot of work with the ensemble.'

Cast members commented that occasionally organisation was an issue as 'sometimes bits of scenes were missed' and one said 'the majority of my direction (was) given in intensive week.' A prod team member echoed this saying 'Better planning ahead, less realising something hadn't been taught when recapping'.

Communication frequently came up as an issue for the cast. For example, one cast member said 'Perhaps more communication with other prod team members? Sometimes ideas clashed and rehearsal schedules changed unexpectedly'. Another said 'could have done better with the organisation with dancing'. Another said 'There (were) multiple choices and decisions made about certain characters being present in some dance numbers that brought up questions.'

One cast member felt that ‘When attempting to raise points or ideas when working with Alex, it often felt like he either completely ignored them or answered questions in a way that didn’t provide a useful answer.’

Another cast member said that Lizzy seemed to be ‘under-utilised’ and would sometimes just ‘sit and watch (Alex) direct’.

Multiple cast members brought up the dynamic between the ensemble and the leads with one saying ‘More Interactions between ensemble members and named cast (would have kept) them feeling involved and not as an afterthought.’ Another said ‘maybe a bit more integration with the cast’ (although it was unclear whether they meant between the directors and the cast or within the cast) and another felt ‘The ensemble were treated as glorified backup dancers rather than actual actors giving importance to a scene.’

In Terms of direction style, one cast member felt there was an ‘abysmal lack of character work and motivation work’ and criticized that ‘Some actors actually changed their interpretation completely and the directorial team didn’t even notice. More workshops should be implemented.’ Another said ‘The direction felt rather hit or miss at times. Some direction was rather vague ... whilst at other times, the direction felt like (it was) being micromanaged’.

Prod team members echoed a few of these comments with one saying ‘Alex did not seem to truly care about the ensemble... simply didn’t direct them a lot of the time. This isolated them from leads and from the directing team itself’. This prod team member also felt that sometimes alex overstepped by singing along or joining in with the dancing.

Tech and audience members commented on the overall look of the show saying ‘the stage sometimes looked overcrowded’. One said ‘diction should have been picked up on more’ and ‘transitions were often extremely awkward’.

## **Musical Direction**

The cast’s feedback for music direction was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone praised Molly and Charlie saying they were ‘incredible’, ‘very approachable’, ‘dedicated’, ‘insanely helpful and talented’, ‘a great team’ and had ‘extremely positive energy’ (I could go on and on). Specifically many people praised their ‘dedication to offering additional rehearsal slots in their own time’. They also said the teaching was clear and never felt rushed. ‘There was great focus on the harmonies and later on on balance between all the parts which resulted in a show that sounded stunning whenever anyone was singing.’

One cast member said ‘the combination of Molly and Charlie was an amazing partnership’ and another said ‘Molly and Charlie make a great team and they were both clear and patient with us’ (insert several quotes about how Molly must be protected at all costs)

Another commented ‘It was also nice rehearsing with the keys and guitar as they ensured that the jump from just keys to a whole band wasn’t as intense.’

Prod team members echoed these compliments with comments including ‘Molly is the best musical director I’ve ever had the pleasure to work with’, ‘Molly was absolutely solid and there’s no other way to put that.’, ‘She deserves massive credit for really growing into the role of the conductor.’, ‘Charlie did really well in a role he hadn’t done before and his knowledge and feedback was invaluable in the process’.

There was also high praise for the band: ‘Also the band was \*\*\*\*\* sick’, ‘5 musicians playing the parts of 6 and no one seemed to notice... so goddamn talented and I think at points that was the most solid pit I’ve ever played in’.

A band member said ‘Molly and Charlie were a dream to work with’.

To sum up: ‘I aspire to make any aspect of a show work as well as this one did.’ and ‘10/10 would recommend to a friend.’

Many cast members said the MD team could have been more picky in the run up to the shows with regards to harmonies and phrasing. The cast also mentioned that harmony tracks uploaded online would have been very helpful.

Several prod team members said Molly and Charlie needed to be more strict and authoritative in rehearsals as there was a ‘tendency for the cast to start taking advantage’.

It was also mentioned that it was a shame there was no one on the team who knew a great deal about vocal technique but the directors helped with that. One prod team member commented that taking leads to someone outside of the prod team for help with vocal technique felt undermining and it would have been nice to ‘work together to resolve the issue’.

## **Choreography**

A summary for almost all the choreo feedback is: It was really hard but the cast loved the challenge and eventually it looked amazing! The cast praised Katie multiple times for being ‘super patient’ and many commented on how helpful the large amount of recaps were at giving them more confidence. Almost all the cast members said they loved how challenging the dance was and ‘People genuinely became better dancers because of it’. A general summary would be ‘Choreo was challenging but in a way that pushed everyone to be the best they could be and really feel the gratification of when you finally get it right!! Katie had a lot of patience and spent

a lot of time recapping which was helpful. The style was very different to most musicals and was very enjoyable to learn.'

The choreo was 'insane', 'so cool', 'creative' and 'slapped'.

Many cast members said warm ups/stamina work was really helpful but would have been good to start earlier in the process.

Two cast members said they struggled with having rehearsal days completely dedicated to dance 'The rehearsals went on for too long with barely any breaks which didn't make them as enjoyable as they could have been' and it tired out the cast making it hard to learn/remember steps. They also suggested having mixed recaps which focused on both singing and dancing at the same time. Another felt that too much of the rehearsal time was taken up by making and going over formations which may have been avoided if they had been written down. One said Sometimes choreo didn't fit with the vibe of the song.

Audience members said the choreo was 'SICKKKKKK', 'sparkey and fun'.

However one audience member commented that some of the cast didn't know a lot of the choreography and another pointed out that some of the foot work was lost because of the set up of The Annex

Prod team members also praised the choreography saying it was 'slick and cool' and 'styles we hadn't seen in showstoppers before'. They also praised Katie for being a patient teacher.

The only negatives picked up from the prod team were that choreo and direction could have communicated more and been flexible so the dance fitted in better with the lines/story.

## **Production**

All cast members said they loved the publicity for the show, particularly praising the professional look of the recording and photography. They also pointed out the personalised pixel characters, eye catching poster and loved the messages from the west end cast! To sum up 'i mean it slapped didn't it'.

The main issue pointed out by the cast was that there was no formal flyering booked which was a 'missed opportunity'.

Production team members also said the graphics and videos were really great. One prod team member praised Chloe for 'being a great presence in rehearsals and keeping control of the cast when they were being loud'. They also said she 'went far and above what should be expected of a producer'. However, two prod team members said they were disappointed with the lateness of the promo videos. They also both commented that the head shots we're edited by the MD and the videos edited by a cast member which is 'really not their job'. The programmes were also mentioned as looking 'unprofessional', "'too dark to read', 'rubbish quality'.

One prod team member summarised “it felt like it was difficult to check up on the publicity team without them getting extremely defensive so things which should have been chased up were not’

Audience members also said there could have been more physical presence on campus e.g. flyering and that it ‘has all the elements there but could have been pushed more’.

There was very high praise for the costumes in the show. People said ‘immy was amazing’, ‘With a low budget, these producers worked wonders and not only making the show look insane but also fun to do!’. ‘exceptionally high standard with a lot of dedication and determination on the team's side.’ A few praised Immy for ‘putting in so much time’ especially with the squip costume which looked incredible. People also pointed out Halloween as ‘insane’ and they liked the idea of the cliques.

The only cast member criticism was that the costume putting together ‘started a little late’.

Prod team feedback for costumes was 100% positive ‘All of them were great and really added to the aesthetic of the show. It was also really helpful having the props for the whole of intensive week as this allowed the cast to get used to using them early.’

One audience member did a s/o to Harriet's halloween costume and others said ‘costumes were amazing, props were adorbs’. However, one audience member said ‘dont wear cast clothing from showstoppers, or other uni stuff/leavers hoodies’

## **Tech**

All cast members said the tech looked amazing. ‘Tech was insane and they were all so lovely and patient’ ‘very professional’ ‘the show looked gorgeous and none of that could have happened without them’ ‘The tech was really fun and intense!! The intelligent lights were so fancy and mega exciting to have on stage. The tech crew put in so much time and it really paid off, especially the 2 tech runs they did for us’.

The only suggestion from the cast was that ‘it would have been nice to integrate tech into the rehearsal process a bit more/ involving them in games and warm ups or getting a proper introduction to members’

The prod team also had high praise for the tech saying ‘I mean come on it was literally phenomenal’, ‘Tech crew were fab’. ‘Sound were brilliant, respectful and put up with the band's shit fantastically. There were a lot of technical issues but these were dealt with as best they could have been and most importantly, sound stayed calm through everything.’

However, one prod team member said ‘There were technical issues from sound that were detrimental to our playing and I think these happened for a few reasons. I think the sound team was too big and kept changing so that no night was consistent and everything kept changing as a result. Secondly, I was told that members of StageSoc were changing things on the sound desk without telling anyone or explaining what they were doing. This was incredibly frustrating and if the band wasn't as strong, they would have really struggled to carry on playing at points.’ A band member also echoed this saying ‘Night to night the levels in our headphones were changing and this made it so hard to play’.

Others pointed out a few missed lighting cues and mic problems but nothing major.

Audience members said ‘sounded amazing’ ‘really sharp, fun lighting’ but also said ‘@male cast members, HIDE YOUR MOTHERFUCKING MIC... total boner killer’. Another thought the set design was weak and didn't really make sense.

A member of tech said ‘shout out to sound for dealing with sweating mics, quick changes, eds mask, 37828173 instruments per band member etc.’ but also that they ‘got real bad cabin fever during that Sunday with get in/tech run. It was completely necessary but idk if there might be a better way around it in the future so techies don't scream.’

### **Overall Rehearsal Experience**

There were mixed responses from the cast. Positively people said ‘challenging but i loved every minute’ ‘The show was a really cool one to get the chance to perform and I loved being a part of it.’ ‘massively enjoyable’. However, many commented on the treatment of the ensemble ‘Yeah the show was good but I really hated being treated like a second class citizen’ another said ‘It felt like the ensemble were outcasted slightly and were put in scenes just because’ and ‘I think the show doesn't lend itself well to having an ensemble. I felt we were used as backup dancers and singers’.

Another cast member said ‘because rehearsals were so long and hard and we didn't have many breaks i often left feeling quite deflated and stressed’

Prod team responses were also mixed. Positive comments included ‘my experience was exceptionally positive overall ... i felt supported from the start of the process right to the end’. ‘I basically had a great time and particularly loved getting to know the Freshers as well as developing existing relationships with the other oldies’

However, several prod team members said the conduct of the cast and other prod team members was ‘really unprofessional’. One said ‘one thing that was continually frustrating was the lack of timekeeping/organisation from some of the cast. Lateness to rehearsals occurred often, despite

multiple complaints from the prod team'. Another said 'specific cast members rallying and encouraging others to make complaints that were the specific worry of one person who managed to get a whole group who had nothing to do with said issue involved. Also there was a case where one prod member organised a secret meeting with everyone else in the prod team except for the director and choreo. Apparently this meeting was conducted in order to target the two missing members and discuss them in a way which would not be appreciated in a normal setting let alone one which is considered 'professional'.

This was also brought up by a prod team member in the general comments section. They said they felt that, in some liaison sessions ' some of the concerns raised were not appropriate for cast members to question such as the amount of dance in the show and how much individual acting the ensemble had to do. To me, these felt like things up to the discretion of the prod team'

And also 'I discovered that specific members of both the prod team and cast had been calling meetings with other members of the prod team or cast to encourage them to, and I quote, "tell them what we really think". I was later informed by multiple people that there had been a sense of coercion regarding making complaints about the show.

'I am appalled and quite frankly disgusted that this happened as it goes against the whole aim of the society to provide a fun environment for people who love musical theatre to come together and share their passion.'

## **General Comments**

The cast's general comments were positive with people saying 'this show was lit' 'thank god we survived corona' and 'I'm so glad I'm part of it' and 'loved it, favourite show process so far'. However, again people brought up feeling 'neglected' as an ensemble member. 'respect for ALL the cast, not just the people you cast as leads' and 'big divide between ensemble and mains, which was sad to see'.

Prod team members said 'it was a fantastic show' 'I'm so proud of this show and always will be' 'it was a great pleasure working with all of you'.

The one tech response said 'bit happy it was magic' and audience members said 'show was actually peng' cast smashed it' and 'had a great time'.