

ILYB FEEDBACK

There were 17 responses overall: 7 Audience, 4 Prod Team, 2 Band, 3 Cast, 1 Tech

DIRECTION

There is overwhelming praise overall for Maciek's direction and blocking. One Audience member commented: "All the scenes were really slick. Very well received by audience members!" and another one added "The scene changes were so slick!!! And there seemed to be great chemistry between each couple!!!". A cast member also gushed "Maciek Shasha you incredible human. Wow, you had such a clear vision and idea of what you wanted and worked us hard to achieve that. I love you so much and am so grateful for such an awesome show experience."

One comment made about the Director is his lack of confidence: "maciek needed to back himself more, and I know he's a babe and didn't want to annoy us but like it's your show dude, BACK YOUR DECISIONS". This was backed up by another prod team member: "Maciek needs to back himself more! He did a great job, but sometimes it felt like the prod team didn't have clear leadership as occasionally he wouldn't make decisions as confidently or decisively as needed (as this was his passions project, & as a director, I felt like he was the one responsible for doing this)." These, however, were small qualms and in no way hindered the overall experience.

2 band members answered the feedback with regarding to direction too. Overall, they felt that the director overstepped in his role as backed by this quote: "Felt that the director overstepped occasionally with regards to the musical side of things. It would be preferable for us if all issues with regards to the band/ how we're playing went through the musical director." and "The director frequently overstepped with regards to band, making comments that ranged from unhelpful, to incorrect, to laughable. The impression I got was that the director fancied himself as an MD but did not have the ear to pick out exactly what was happening/ not working so he just said things for the sake of saying something."

There seems to be a vast difference between the opinions of the cast and prod team and that of the band, but it seems to be more down to the tensions between Showstoppers and the pit band as a whole, rather than specifically Maciek. This will be explored more in the general comments section.

TLDR; Maciek was fab and the show looked slick and professional. He may have lacked the confidence this time as his directorial debut but needs to back his ideas as they were extremely successful! Perhaps the input a director has with the band should be decided and discussed previously with both band and MD to make sure no overstepping occurs. To summarise, a prod team member said "Each of the four leads ended up creating great dynamic characters with real arcs and Alex and Imy created their own fantastic highlights out of their own characterisation without much to work with. For a script which leaves a bit to be desired, we managed to put together something quite lovely."

MUSICAL DIRECTION

The opinion of the MDs can be explained by the quotes “I mean, the music for the show is incredible, but the amount of work the musical directors put in really showed in the performances! Well done, you stars.” (audience), “I feel that the musical director was strong in their direction of the band and I enjoyed working with them.” (band member) and “Molly Ellis should be protected at all costs. Keep her, love her, always tell her how amazing she is.” (cast). Not much else to say tbh.

There was some overall confusion and negative feedback regarding the AMD Andy. A band member stated that “Although Andy was not a strong keys player and is not as keen on continuing with Showstoppers as he first said, it is great that Molly made an attempt to train up new MD’s.” whereas a cast member said that “Andy did not contribute much to the process which was a shame. He was often late for rehearsals and quite confused. He did try though.” His timeliness and lack of experience may have put unnecessary strain on the MD and the band, but this will improve with experience.

TLDR; Molly’s a babe and must be protected at all costs, Andy struggled but put in effort to learn. “she was really great as a secondary leader of the project, always having really great knowledge and passion for the show and could effectively act as an AD for me if I wanted to bounce ideas off her which was really helpful. She was always really patient with the cast, providing the harmony tracks and countless hours of her own time making sure everything was not perfect.”

CHOREOGRAPHY

“Amy Springett slaps, that is all.” Genuinely nothing but praise. One audience member stated “The choreo really made some of the key moments of the show, more of it would have been great” but more held back choreo may have been a directorial interpretation. A prod team member said “Amy was fabulous to work with. All of the dances she created fit exactly what I wanted from them and she was very flexible in terms of being able to create something from nothing or work from blocking which I already had a skeleton in place for. Dances were always character-driven and well suited to what I wanted from them based on our conversations about the particular numbers.”

PRODUCTION

Several audience members had very positive comments on the production within the show: “Simple simple costumes made the whole thing seem realistic” and “Great loved how they represented the character really well!!!” Gaby, the supervising producer and person in charge of Props and Costumes overall seemed to have not been on schedule as she would have liked as stated by a prod team member: “My main issue with working with Gaby was a lack of response when asking for things to be done and checking that tasks were being carried out. As the person who was meant to head up the production effort and having the most experience of all of the producers, it should have been her responsibility to coordinate the production effort and help Mark and Jack carry out their work.”. A cast member also commented on Gaby and Mark’s ability within the team: “The production team were quite frankly bad with this show. Jack was amazing, but Gaby and Mark really let the show down with little to no work from them until show week when they were called out in a show liaison. There was no excuse as far as I’m concerned, Gaby and Mark let themselves and the show down as a whole and it was a real shame.” Publicity also seemed to have the same theme, with the producers

not having the leadership or skills needed to be able to carry out the job effectively: "Mark and Jack lacked a leader in publicity, Gaby as Supervising does not know enough about publicity to manage the two so things fell apart. There were big inconsistencies with the branding which, while not a disaster, was sometimes a bit jarring as the designs did change a lot through the process. When it comes to getting the jobs done, the lateness of finding the programme in the design state it was in was unacceptable. There was no reason that the programme design was not shared until the day before the printing deadline. When this came in, it was clear that people on the team were not prepared or qualified to take on that role, resulting in a lot of stress on an external party in this respect."

TLDR; it all came together in the end and looked fit. Behind the scenes, there needs to be more emphasis on suitability of supervising producers and making sure APs are guided effectively.

TECH

"The staging looked great! Tech were fab from an audience perspective"

"Staging was really cool in how the bar and spinning things would alter the scenes from one to the other. Sound was really good since I didn't have trouble hearing anyone (especially during dialogue with music underscore which an sometimes get lost!!) and the lighting was really good, I especially loved the different coloured spot lights in one of the songs". On the whole, StageSoc smashes it again.

The band addressed that StageSoc actively tried to mend the tensions that were there from Dagenham: "They made an active effort to be nice to us; this was lovely particularly given that sometimes band and tech have had a couple of minor altercations in the past. There were a couple of minor sound problems but given the equipment they were using and the experience level of some of the tech crew, it was negligible."

TLDR; Smashed it stagesoc, and really trying to mend tensions with band.

OVERALL COMMENTS

Audience:

- "One of the best, if not best showstoppers shows I've seen in 4 years. Very proud of all involved, they all did amazingly good!"
- "Really liked it. A fun small musical I wouldn't have come across otherwise. Really liked the songs."

Cast:

- "The best show I've ever done. The best director, MD and Choreo and by far the best cast. Nothing could tarnish this process, and I'd do it again tomorrow if I could. Simply the best and so so happy. "
- "i miss it. i love it. i want to do it again."

Prod:

- "This was a fantastic show which came together beautifully because of the passion and love for it from the cast and the creative team. I loved the rehearsal process so much and working

directly with other members of the creative team and the cast. I feel really close to the people involved and am so proud of everyone's growth in their respective roles. This will go down as a really special show for me and I'm really grateful to everyone who helped me put it together. I love you dearly"

- "Showstoppers really need to consider if it is going to continue their relationship with The Edge as a reviewer. The behaviour of the reviewer was extremely disrespectful for those who put a lot of time into creating the show. Members of the stage crew made complaints of being distracted as a result of constant chatter throughout the performance and large amounts of alcohol and spirits being consumed by the group of ComedySoc members the reviewer was attending with. If Showstoppers wants to continue to grow its reputation as a society, especially in light of recent national recognition, it needs to make sure that its shows are being treated professionally and receiving fair scrutiny."
- "I think the lack of leadership and the blurring of prod team roles (especially in terms of producers) led to lots of butting heads and confusion. The attitude of cast members was also hurtful at times as things were challenged or simply ignored and frustrations they had were taken out on unconnected parties, the most obvious example of this being tech run. The snapping and irritation in that time led to an uncomfortable atmosphere and led to tensions rising unfairly. "

Band

- "This was my 9th showstoppers band and by far my worst experience as a band member. The levels of ego among the cast were insufferable and it seemed the MD nor the director made any attempts to stop this. The cast seemed like they were never pushed, everything was 'perfect' (and from listening to the show multiple times, it was not). The band felt unwanted and excluded throughout. A post in the group detailed that the 'cast, prod and crew' were invited to the trago brunch but in the very next sentence the 'cast, prod, crew and band' were required for photos. This was raised with the director but at the time of writing this, this has not been amended.
- "If band members break rules then the MD needs to understand that they have the right to kick them off the show and find a dep. Showstoppers is lucky and unlucky right now in the sense that they have a brilliant group of professional level musicians who play for them but unfortunately these people have gotten cocky and have acted like dicks. I certainly have (Charlie here) and for that I apologise. The band wasn't disrespected during Dagenham, the prod team were lovely to us and we were just dicks. In the future to stop this happening the MD needs to be as firm as they think necessary with the band and set clear rules. That said, this is the MD's responsibility and the band will get their back up and get defensive if it comes from any other part of the prod team. We play for Showstoppers because we enjoy it and we have nothing but respect for our MD's (for the most part) so they just need to have the confidence to really be in charge of the band."

Tech

- "really loved this show and so happy i got to be a part of it!"