

Young Dick Barton

**Warehouse Theatre,
Croydon**

rating



FAST, furious and fun – oh such fun. There is a plot weaving through the show but my advice is not to try and follow it too closely – nor laugh too long at the jokes because you will certainly miss the next one and possibly the one after that. They pour helter skelter out of the script.

The incredibly hard-working cast are such masters of disguise, accents and vocal talents that it is something of a shock to see just six line up for their curtain call. There are the good – young Dick and his school pal, and the bad like Al Carrumba, played like Noel Coward with a foreign accent by the talented Stefani Bednarczyk, who wrote the clever lyrics to the show's many songs.

As with the other Dick Barton adventures which have emanated so successfully from the Warehouse theatre, the plot is moved along in cut glass tones by the BBC radio announcer – Duncan Wisbey, who is responsible for the whole script, gallivanting through the lines to perfection.

Jeremy Barlow, cutting his professional teeth in the part, is young Dick, equalling the acting ability round him with aplomb (or a Nice Young Plum Duff – and we thought NYPD was something completely different!).

Momentary visual gags include the might of King Kong and a human computer complete with abacus and a real version of that infuriating computer egg timer with which we are so familiar.

Music for the songs is often borrowed and we get new words to the Modern Major General's patter song from *Pirates of Penzance* and wonderful Welsh miners in great harmony singing to *Cwm Rhondda*.

Modern references are used in old fashioned ways like the Genie of the Lamp who is sorry to keep Young Dick waiting for a response, acknowledging "Your wish is important to us" and we learn that Dick's first kiss feels like tripe, only warmer! The "kissee" is the mercurial Christine Holman who turns from school chum into a wicked girl in black to a charming blonde in the blink of an eye.

Directed so expertly by Ted Craig, I urge you to go, to try and keep pace with the comedy and delight in a bravura production from our threatened jewel, the Warehouse Theatre.

Theo Spring

Croydon Advertiser 14.12.06

