

## Copacabana 2024 Review

The annual school musical is always a highlight of the school year in Our Lady's Templemore, and this year's production of 'Copacabana' certainly did not disappoint. This musical had it all: a talented cast of over 180 students, vibrant colours, beautiful singing and high energy dance routines.

Set in the 1940s, the story follows Stephen (Adam Tynan O'Connor), a young, aspiring songwriter who introduces us to the Copacabana nightclub from his imagination, populated by characters of his invention. Adam did a fantastic job of creating the story for the audience, as well as confidently leading the opening number "Copacabana", alongside the Copa Girls chorus dancers, kitted out fantastically in their showgirl costumes and hats, with a bright and energetic opening dance which gave a taster of the spectacle to come.

We are next introduced to Lola La Mar (Laurie Mullen), the main character in Stephen's story, who had 'Just Arrived' in New York, with dreams of becoming a star. She is hired by Sam Silver (Stephen Tuohy) as a Copa Girl, with the help of bartender and songwriter Tony Forte (Eoin Boyle) and worldly-wise cigarette girl Gladys Murphy (Ruth Johnston).

Laurie Mullen was exceptional in the role of Lola, a role which requires powerful vocals, dancing and acting, as well as the ability to convey a variety of different emotions. Laurie's singing voice was incredible in her solo "Man Wanted", as well as in the excellent dance numbers "Just Arrived", "I Gotta Be Bad" (assisted with beautiful harmonies by Izzy Adlum and Amy O'Brien in both numbers) and "El Bravo". Adam and Laurie's emotional duet "This Can't Be Real" was sung beautifully.

Eoin Boyle is no stranger to the Our Lady's stage, and this was evident in his confident performance as Tony Forte. His singing was superb in "Sweet Heaven" and "Who Needs to Dream". He also led the catchy dance number "Dancing Fool" alongside the Copa Boys chorus dancers. Eoin was the perfect lead for this brilliantly choreographed dance routine that the boys expertly performed to the

audience's delight. The final "Sweet Heaven" duet between Laurie and Eoin really showcased their stunning vocals together.

Ruth Johnston showed excellent stage presence and comic timing in her role of Gladys Murphy. Ruth acted as a motherly figure to the Copa workers and displayed her strong vocals in her solo "Copa Girl".

Stephen Tuohy was hilarious as the Copa's no-nonsense but kind manager Sam Silver, providing great laughs with his comical performance. Ruth and Stephen also gave a brilliant performance in the song "Who Am I Kidding", performing it alongside McManus (John Cleere), Willie (Aaron Breen) and two showgirls (Ruby Stapleton Higgins and Orfhlaith Bergin).

We are next introduced to Rico Castelli (Kevin Bourke), a diamond-wearing gangster, and Conchita Alvarez (Julie Grey), his Latina girlfriend. Kevin and Julie both had the difficult job of speaking in Cuban and Spanish accents, which they both excelled in.

Kevin Bourke played the antagonist character of Rico convincingly, showcasing strong acting abilities in this role. He led the Latin dance number "Bolero D'Amore" alongside a mixed chorus. "Bolero D'Amore" and the "Foxtrot" dance numbers were ballroom dances and involved partner work, which was something new to the Our Lady's stage, but nonetheless enthralled the audience.

Julie Grey gave a terrific performance as Conchita Alvarez, portraying the stylish diva with superb comic timing. She led the colourful, high energy "Havana/Caramba" song alongside the Tropicana Girls chorus dancers, who performed this lively dance number to perfection.

There were convincing performances all 'round in all other speaking parts (Joe Johnston, Kay Greed, Keira Patterson, Tom Landy, Oran Gleeson, Silvia Karl, Leah Rose Weldon, Chloe Myles, Maeve Tynan O'Connor, Tadgh O'Shea, Katie Devanney, Finan McAleese, George Hartigan Hogan, Keela Campion, Kim Farmazes Moloughney, Larry O'Brien, Joss Devine, Ollie Morris, Dylan Breen and Jennifer Cormack).

Huge credit must go to our director/choreographer Therese Maher, musical director Mary Rose McNally and all the teachers who were involved in this production. Therese Maher worked her magic on all the students who stepped onstage, ensuring that everyone could give their best performance on the stage. Mary Rose McNally, along with her orchestra, provided the lively and catchy music that made the show so enjoyable and memorable. The pair spent long hours working with the cast to make this show the success it was. A big thanks to them for their hard work and dedication.

Thanks to Ms Anne Marie Johnston for her hard work to “make it all happen” to such a high standard. Congratulations on another huge success. Thanks to Ms Aileen Cashman, Ms Avril Kinnerk and Ms Ruth Butler who worked tirelessly on costumes to ensure every student looked their best onstage. Huge credit must also go to Mr Fin O’Hara and Mr. Ronan Kinnane whose talents could be seen in the outstanding set design and construction. Special thanks also to their team of art students from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year who assisted him in their free time after school hours. Thanks to Ms Norma Galvin and Mr Ronan Kinane who( with the help of their TY stage crew ) expertly managed all the props backstage and ensured seamless scene changes.

Congratulations to the entire production team and to all students involved in another absolutely super show. Take a bow!... you certainly deserve all those standing ovations you received.

By Lucy Daly, Transition year