

Zippy Show in Launch

With a show as zippy as its title, singers of outstanding vocal and acting talent, a director with the Svengali touch and deft musical underpinning, Singular Productions launched its debut into the SOSA Studio.

This space was enlivened for some years by frequent productions from director Patrick Lim and musician Anthony Hunt, now otherwise occupied.

Set in New York, traced in by Victoria Lamb's simple stage right skyline, in *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* Joe DiPietro (book and lyrics) and Jimmy Roberts (music) lay before us 23 of the uncountable variations on an oxymoronish theme. Having met the ideal love of our lives, all of us set about tweaking our mates into – what? Mirror images of ourselves? Why can't a woman, or man, be like me (thank you, Henry Higgins)? Why do we do this?

Well, we just do. Unfailingly entertaining examples from Johanna Allen, Deborah Caddy, Adam Goodburn and Benjamin Rasheed as pairs of young, old, beautiful, plain, exciting, dull and everything-in-between hopeful-present and puzzled-past lovers try to find an answer.

Every number is pointedly smart. Lyrics occasionally cosy up to W.S. Gilbert, tunes flow easily, securely supported by Nerissa Pearce at the centre stage Steinway and the violin commentaries of Imants Larsens – now cheeky, now soulful, now suddenly grabbing the spotlight and jazzing up the entr'acte with a spectacular cadenza all of his own devising – with a little help from Ludwig van.

Every number was a winner. Stand-outs were only by a whisker and probably determined as much by the love lives of the ones making the choice as by objectivity. Deb and Jo bemoaning the Serious single man drought; Adam and Ben with the most infuriating of all excuses Because I'm a guy; Jo in a vile, icky green monstrosity of a dress and shoes as a thoroughly sloshed Always a bridesmaid "dressed in a gown I detest" and surrounded by a truly hideous collection of gear designed to make her less attractive than the bride; Marriage tango couple Adam and Jo undeflectable from their desperate desire "We're gonna have sex tonight" even by the kids screaming "The lizard's eating the guppy!" "Let it!" they shout and whiz off to bed.

The transformations of the four singers from 30-something to 30 and more years on lovers were arguably the best proof both of their own abilities and the perceptive eye of the director. Adam muses sotto voce while Jo leafs through a magazine "All the years we've been through / Once again who are you? / Shouldn't I be less in love with you?" (pause, ppp "No". Jo looks up: "What?" Adam: "Nothing".) So simple, so poignant. Then Ben and Jo, really, really old, meeting in the waiting room of a funeral parlour for two

different funerals. It's a pickup! They warm to each other. They waltz very very slowly. They have their differences. Unlike all the other intolerant young guys and gals they nod their older and wiser heads: "I Can live with that." I love you, you're not perfect, but don't change.

ELIZABETH SILSBURY