

Showstopping performance



Rosanna Rothery saw Dancing Feet Academy Of Dance's *The Next Step* at the Queen's Theatre, Barnstaple

OH the glamour! Stunning costumes, atmospheric lighting, snazzy steps, pyrotechnics, gorgeous hair and makeup and a chance to entertain on a professional stage.

The first-class production values that go into a Dancing Feet Academy show give youngsters a taste of what it might be like, one day, to dance in a West End musical or be part of a top professional dance act. And, no doubt, it's this fun, high-adrenalin buzz that has inspired many former students to go on to train full time at top performing arts schools.

From the cute tiny tots performing delightfully sweet curtain raiser Buglife to the advanced tap students giving a stunning syncopated version of Uptown Funk, everyone looked like they were having great fun.

I am always impressed by the endless stream of ideas that Nadine Morrish and her team of dance teachers have when it comes to creating interweaving choreography ranging from graceful, lyrical and balletic through to funky, sassy and energetic.

It was also fabulous to see the utter confidence these teachers impart to their students: every single dancer sure footed and smiling!

An uplifting sense of joie de vivre permeated the whole show with dancers of all ages not only demonstrating impressive body control and technique, but a passion for performing. I was particularly impressed by Wartime Babes, a routine performed by the advanced tap group. Fabulous footwork and great acting skills combined to create a heart-warming nostalgic period piece from an era of domestic bliss.

This must have been a very poignant show for fellow dance teacher Kathy Wellington, who has retired after 30 years of being a leading light on the local dance scene.

Students from Pilton Dance Academy – now taken over by Dancing Feet – performed Kathy's beautiful ballet number Waltz Of The Flowers and her fun tap routine Pixilated Penguin.

The Next Step, which included musical theatre song and dance routines, finished with one of the most rousing finales I've seen at the Queen's Theatre. The whole cast (involving students past and present as well as teachers) performed their successful Chicago routine (already debuted at the London Palladium), followed by Let's Face The Music And Dance. What a showstopper! Loved all that pizzazz!

