

Review: Dreamboats and Petticoats ***** (Ticks All The Boxes!)



I don't know about you, dear reader, but I'm getting a tad weary of all the politics going on at the moment. We've just had the local council elections and a month from now it will be the general election. As if we didn't have enough politics in the news, at the weekend there was the French presidential election. To escape from it all I headed to Edinburgh's Playhouse on Monday evening to watch the 10th Anniversary Tour of Dreamboats and Petticoats. And, let me tell you, I was glad I did.

Written by Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran, the writers behind TV classics 'Goodnight Sweetheart' and 'Birds of a Feather, this energetic musical is set in 1961. Emotions are running high as young musicians Norman and Bobby compete to win a national song writing competition – and, more importantly, the attention of the gorgeous Sue. But when Bobby discovers that shy Laura is no slouch on the piano, love and rock'n'roll fame beckons.

It's a love story with the undeniable theme being the course of true love never runs smooth. Norman and Bobby are played by Alastair Hill and Alistair Higgins respectively but, for me, the star of the show was Elizabeth Carter who played the shy but smart Laura.



The show is not just a musical but a comedy and a trip back in time to more innocent days. The audience comprised mostly of

folk who would have been love-struck teenagers five decades ago which was just as well as some of the gags might not mean very much today's teenagers ('what's the point of me having a barber as a mate?' had its obvious 'something for the weekend, sir?' connotations – and I'm not talking about a short back and sides)

Laura Darton was also impressive as Sue – or Runaround Sue as she was labelled given her propensity for anything in trousers – while Jimmy Johnston as the older Bobby and Mike Lloyd as Frank/Slugger/Compere also made the audience laugh.

Inspired by the smash hit multi-million selling CD albums Dreamboats and Petticoats One, Two, Three, Four and Five, the West End sell-out sensation Dreamboats and Petticoats The Musical features some of the greatest hit songs of the Rock 'n' Roll era. These include *Let's Dance*, *To Know Him Is To Love Him*, *Shaking All Over*, *Bobby's Girl*, *Little Town Flirt*, *Only Sixteen*, *Runaround Sue*, *Happy Birthday Sweet 16*, *Let It Be Me*, *Great Pretender*, *C'mon Everybody*, *Let's Twist Again* and many more hits from music's golden era.

The dazzling success of the first five albums in the Dreamboats and Petticoats series sent the message loud and clear. With over 4 million copies sold and several weeks at the Number One spot in the compilation charts, the Great British public were saying that they didn't just want to listen to pure nostalgia: they'd love to see it as well.

All in all, Dreamboats and Petticoats is great entertainment with a feel-good factor we could all do with during these troubled times. To end with another electoral analogy, it certainly ticked all the boxes for me.

Dreamboats and Petticoats is at the Edinburgh Playhouse until Saturday 13th May. Tickets are available [here](#) – but be quick as there's bound to be a huge demand.

Edinburgh Reporter Rating: *****