

# Review: Saturday Night Fever

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Forty years ago, I strutted out of the ABC cinema in Aberdeen's Union Street after watching the film Saturday Night Fever. Like most of the other young blooded males heading home that night, I kidded myself on I was John Travolta, the dancing superstar of the film. It was very much of its time but now the story of Travolta's alter ego Tony Manero has been brought back to life in a spectacular musical production which opened at the Edinburgh Playhouse on Tuesday evening.

The vast majority of the audience at the Playhouse would have seen the film, many, I would suggest, more than once. They knew what to expect from the show and they weren't disappointed.

Bill Kenwright's musical production stays closely to the film version with humour, heartache and tragedy. The star of the show is, of course, Tony Manero played by Richard Winsor who is best known for parts in television dramas such as BBC's Casualty and Channel Four's Hollyoaks. Winsor certainly performs as if he is John Travolta and his dancing moves are

highly impressive. The show tells Manero's story, a young man who still lives at home with his parents and younger sister and is stuck in a dead-end job in a hardware store. Saturday night is Manero's chance to escape the drudgery of everyday life and he struts his considerable stuff at Club 2001 Odyssey in Brooklyn, New York.

He dreams of becoming a dancing superstar so when a dance competition at Club 2001 offers a \$1,000 prize to the winner, Manero is confident he can take the prize – if only he can find a suitable dancing partner. Annette – played by Anna Campkin – is besotted by Manero who feels he won't win the prize with her as his partner. But then Stephanie Mangano – played with some style by Kate Parr – comes on to the scene. If you've seen the film, you'll know the rest.

The idea of having a Bee-Gees tribute act performing at the top of the stage was an inspired one. Edward Handoll, Alastair Hill and Matt Faull set the scenes behind the story and their renditions of the Bee-Gees classics – which, of course, were the cornerstone of the film – were impressive. Stayin' Alive, How Deep is Your Love and More Than a Woman had the audience enthralled and there was a clever addition of another Bee Gees hit – Tragedy – which wasn't part of the film (being released two years after the film was made) but was appropriate for the demise of Bobbie C, whose story tugged at the heartstrings.

The cast were full of energy as they had to be for a show like this and some of this energy transferred to the audience who lapped up every minute of the show.

The lighting effects were also impressive. With the twirling disco balls conspicuously placed on each side of the stage it seemed, at times, like we were in Club 2001 rather than the Edinburgh Playhouse.

If you enjoyed the film version of Saturday Night Fever you will love this musical production. You may even head out of

the theatre walking like Tony Manero.

Okay, it was just me then...

Saturday Night Fever is on at the Edinburgh Playhouse until Saturday 27th October 2018. Tickets [here](#).

Edinburgh Reporter rating: \*\*\*\*