

British Theatre Guide

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Fame

David de Silva

Selladoor Productions

New Victoria Theatre, Woking

1–6 October 2018

Fame is pumped with frenetic energy from the outset, a riot of colourful lights, high kicks and leg warmers fill the stage in this revival of the '80s classic.

It might be a well-known story but clearly *Fame* is appealing to fresh audiences; on a Tuesday night, the theatre was packed to the brim with plenty of teens and children filling the stalls.

Following the highs and lows of the class of 1984, the newest batch of students arrive at the New York High School for the Performing Arts. The first half introduces the young, energised teens. It proves this is a cast brimming with talent, but the plot itself lacks much variation throughout act I. It feels like too much time is spent introducing the characters and preparing their later plot lines, with not enough actually happening to grip us beyond the '80s electropop.

That aside, the energy buzzes and there is some stand-out singing from Keith Jack (Nick), Stephanie Rojas (Carmen) and Molly McGuire (Serena).

Luckily, act II brings far more emotional drive as we delve into the problems of illiterate Tyrone, fame-hungry Carmen and lovesick Serena. The ensemble is made up of strong characters: Louisa Beadel brings plenty of attitude as the rock 'n' roll drummer Lambchops and Albey Brookes oozes confident young joker as Joe, the horny teen. Simon Anthony manages to add real sincerity to his earnest young character.

Jorgie Porter excels with her prim and prissy demeanour as Iris, though her ballet skills lack some of the grace which might make this wonder child dancer more believable. Jamal Crawford's performance pops, his raw talent and streetwise vibe contrasting brilliantly with the established ballet world he's trying to enter.

The emotional rollercoaster starts to ratchet up with Mica Paris's (Miss Sherman) soulful rendition of "These are my Children", but it is Stephanie Rojas who steals the show as she reappears as a very different girl than the one who left full of hope for her big break in LA. Rojas manages to bring across the dead-eyed expression of Carmen's broken spirit and then sings with such heartbreaking desperation during "In LA" that it gives me shivers.

This is a very strong cast delivering a nostalgic slice of this '80s classic. The cast of *Fame* stars plenty of talent who deserve the famous lyric: "remember my name".

Reviewer: [Louise Lewis](#)