

Brighton Rock? – Cheryl wanted aniseed flavour!

Brighton Pavilion? – Someone wanted to see it!

Brighton Boobs & Brass? – We arrived just in the nick of time!

It was the coldest May morning imaginable, when Gareth drew up in his magnificent bus – ‘NO! it’s called a coach’ – on a Raunds industrial estate, to collect his first contingent of Boobies. The skies were grey, it was spitting with rain, but were we disheartened? No, we weren’t! After collecting more girls along the way, we started the very, very long journey down south. We encountered roadworks, football fans heading to Wembley, long queues of traffic, all slowly going in the same direction as us and then brightening skies and sunshine soon helped us on our way.

Eventually, we arrived in Brighton and Hove and then a couple of miles further on, to Port Slade, where we found our venue, The Bird Studios (part of the Institute for Contemporary Theatre) and fell off the bus in a heap of numb legs and desperate cries of ‘where’s the loo?’. Having grabbed the numerous instruments and the many suitcases we take everywhere, we met **Kaia Clarke** and her welcoming and friendly colleagues, who directed us to the food. We were all quite peckish, even though Sally’s sister-in-law had made delicious cup-cakes to keep us going on the journey, along with Glenis’s mountain of sandwiches and Catherine’s yummy flapjacks!

This concert was organised at the Brighton end by Kaia, a 3rd year student on the musical theatre pathway, who had devised it to be a part of her final year dissertation. She had rallied friends and colleagues to provide singers, dancers, and back-stage crew. Being so far away from the Northamptonshire base of Boobs & Brass, the rehearsals of both the band and the performers had taken place separately and none of us knew if it was all going to come together and work, until a rehearsal got underway. After minimal sorting out of who was coming in where, we soon realised that this really was going to work.

With just minutes to spare, we all dashed to the changing room, to don pink jackets and costumes and line up ready to enter the auditorium. The reception the band received from the audience was brilliant from the outset. The venue was intimate, and we were in competition with the Eurovision final that night, but what the audience might have lacked in size, was more than made up for by their enthusiasm.

To see so many students, eagerly preparing to watch a brass band for the very first time, was wonderful. From the first number, from the 2017 film 'The Greatest Showman', with dance students from the 3rd year IC Theatre course conjuring up PJ Barnum's circus, we were off on a journey through film and stage show music, which went back to 'Over the Rainbow', featuring Kate on tenor horn, from 'The Wizard of Oz' in 1939, then forward to 'I Will Follow Him' from our naughty nuns, led by Mary, from the 1992 film 'Sister Act'. We even had Tracey, using her stunning false nails, demonstrating how Dolly Parton composed the music for the 1980 film '9 to 5'! Theatre students sang with the band 'Skyfall' from the James Bond movie of the same name, 'Bring Him Home' from 'Les Miserables' and 'Never Enough', another number from 'The Greatest Showman'; their talent and professionalism was just fantastic.

Our great friend Dennis Wilby conducted a moving rendition of 'I'll Walk With God' from the 1954 film, 'The Student Prince' and the evening whirled on to a standing ovation at the end, with 'The Imperial March' from 'Star Wars', conducted by Darth Vader (aka our guest conductor Jonathan Mott, wielding his light sabre), having a fit of the vapours under his very hot face mask.

The encore of 'Don't Stop Believing' was the icing on the top of this delicious pink cup-cake, when the entire audience took to the floor and danced with joy and abandon. What an evening! What memories! What fun! Thanks Kaia!
Thanks Brighton!

Carolyn the Compere