

## Thanks for the ride!

Praise for director as musical Nomads hit the ground running

Nomads: Summer Holiday, at the Corn Exchange, Wednesday, October 1 to Saturday, October 4

In 1963, Summer Holiday (Cliff Richard's follow-up film to The Young Ones) was the second most popular film of the year, with several of its lively musical numbers topping the pop charts. It is easy to see why.

The stage musical, adapted from the film, is not often chosen by amateur societies - possibly because it requires a young, lively group to do justice to it. No problem for Newbury's Nomads then.

They hit the stage running, with every single member obviously giving everything they'd got and then a bit more. All this was backed (literally, for they were on stage throughout) by a band, under the direction of Nic Cope, capturing exactly the crisp beat which was at the heart of this production.

It is impossible to praise too highly the four lads playing London bus mechanics who convert a bus into a holiday home and head for the sun. Nomads' chairman Richard George turned in a superb performance as Don, the leader of the group. Acting, singing, dancing - he can do the lot - as can his companions George Stacey (Edwin), Duncan Shelton (Cyril) and Matt Collins (Steve). Whenever the lads were on stage, you expected excellence and got it.

They were well matched with the three girls who made up Do Re Mi, the trio who hitch a lift when their car breaks down on the way to Athens. Holly Lucas (Angie) and sisters Amy and Alice Billington (Mimsie and Alma) were well cast, seemingly effortlessly turning themselves into 1950s girls and easily believable as a singing trio on their way to stardom.

They were joined on the bus by Barbara (EUie Maskell) a runaway pop singer. Ellie had the voice for the part and is another good actress who is an asset to the group.

An outstanding performance came from Alison Hault as Barbara's pushy mum, Stella. Dressed in a variety of costumes, she was as absolutely awful a person as the part demanded - and that's a compliment.

The harmonising was excellent throughout and choreographer Sasha Robaczynski must have been so proud of the slickly-moving chorus numbers.

Congratulations to director Amanda Maskell. What a show, what a joy, yet another winner for Nomads.

CAROLINE FRANKLIN