**Group: Starburst**

**Show: Fame**

**Venue: Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College, Farnborough**

**Date: 7 July 2016**

**Director: Peter Woodford**

**Musical Director: Zoe Hardy**

**Choreographer: Liz Woodford**

**FAME** is an everlastingly popular show full of vibrant, memorable characters and high energy numbers as well as a couple of very emotional ballads It is set in the New York High School of Performing Arts – known as “The Fame School” and we follow a group of students from their start on the road to fame to a tragic end (for at least one of the young hopefuls). We follow rehearsals, students falling in and out of love, struggles with academia and physical and personal obstacles.

**FRONT OF HOUSE:** All was well organised and patrons were warmly welcomed. The hall was laid out in theatre style with tiered seating towards the back of the hall. Patrons were assisted efficiently to their seats.

**THE PROGRAMME** was clearly laid out with messages of welcome and explanation, messages from the cast and credit given to all those who worked behind the scenes. There was information about the charity and forthcoming production as well as some nice rehearsal photos. I would also have liked more information and credit given to the Band.

**SCENERY/SET/PROPERTIES:**  The set: street scene, rehearsal room, etc were effectively created and of high quality and cleverly designed. There was minimal disruption during the scene changes which were done with musical accompaniment from the Band.

**COSTUMES:** The costumes were excellent, with great attention to detail and were in keeping with the characters and story.

**LIGHTING AND SOUND:** The lighting was rather dark and sometimes difficult to see the principals with the following spot seeming out of time. When the bright, horizontal “disco” light came on, there were several gasps from around me indicating some surprise and discomfort. The sound was excellent with voices clear and blended well with the live music.

**THE PRODUCTION:** Director, Peter Woodford, demonstrated his experience and talent as he drew great performances from this young cast as did Liz Woodford with her imaginative and impressive choreography. There was plenty of high energy, especially in the group numbers. With a variety of character including fame obsessed Carmen (Jemima Eaton), ambitious actress Serena (Hannah Norman) quiet musician Scholomo (Lewis Fitzpatrick) and talented but dyslexic dancer, Tyrone (Ross Carpenter), this was a great opportunity to showcase the talent of the group. The music, led by Zoe Hardy, created a solid sound giving the youngsters superb lead. There were many memorable moments: one of my favourites being Lynne Main’s solo powerfully and emotionally charged “These are my children”. The entire cast worked well as a team, they were well-rehearsed and some perfectly timed elements made all the difference to this first class production. Congratulations to the Production Team, headed up by Max Topliss (the necessary backbone for any production) whose hard work, in this instance, led to a polished show that was full of fun and left the audience happily humming on the way out!

A short review will appear in due course on the NODA website.

**CHRIS HORTON**

**District 14 Regional Representative**