

Micky Salberg's Crystal Ballroom Dance Band

On tour from Monday 7th April

What with the endless winter and a credit crunch, it's all too easy to feel gloomy. But I can't think of a better way to counteract the gloom than to treat yourself to this sweet, funny story of love, loss and foot-tapping rock'n' roll.

The latest from Ade Morris takes us back to 1952, when life in post-war Britain is still hard, and rock'n'roll is just starting to flex its muscles in the dance halls. Micky Salberg is less interested in farming than in keeping Charlie the Pig from the butcher, and in starting up a dance band again. He thinks that a new band will be the answer to all their problems, to the despair of his daughter Sam, who is working hard on the farm to keep their financial heads above water. Then Tommy Bostock turns up, a young man whose reasons for being there soon get pushed aside by his ability to play the guitar. The three of them take Micky Salberg's Crystal Ballroom Dance Band into the rock'n' roll era, wowing their audiences (and us) with the brash new sound, while Sam and Tommy find that loathing can turn to love.

This is a charming play, full of lovely performances, laughter, sadness and sensational music. Alex Tomkins as Tommy resembles a young Buddy Holly, both in his matinee idol looks and in his stupendous guitar playing; Pam Jolley as the ever-furious ugly duckling Sam becomes a glorious swan as the singer in the band, as she and Tommy fall in love; and Paul Kissaun's Micky Salberg is wonderful as the father who lost a wife and son in the war, but has kept his faith strong and his love of music alive.

I guarantee an evening with the Crystal Ballroom Dance Band will banish the blues, and the terrific encore will set your feet tapping all the way home.

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