

# Ham & High

HAMPSTEAD & HIGHGATE EXPRESS

60p

THURSDAY AUGUST 20 2009

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## The songs we all know and love

THE GREAT AMERICAN  
SONGBOOK  
New End Theatre  
★★★★☆

**A** FOUR piece orchestra, three singers and a twinkling black starcloth is all it takes to make this a delightful evening of undemanding entertainment.

There is absolutely nothing new or groundbreaking about this show, it is just the golden oldies – the songs we all know by heart and have loved all our lives. Heather Simpkin has directed them with total simplicity, and they are none the worse for that. All these songs are audience pleasers in their own right and the singers give them everything they've got.

Louisa Parry is a pretty redhead with some spectacular costumes and a powerful voice. She sings Ella Fitzgerald classics and the more operatic tunes of Rodgers and Hammerstein with equal enthusiasm. I could have done with a little less volume in Someone To Watch Over Me

that oh so wistful song from Gershwin's Okay and I am disappointed that – although she gives them a mention, she doesn't sing the original words of Bewitched Bothered and Bewildered, that naughty Lorenz Hart lyric from Pal Joey. .

Paul Roberts is a good looking Frank Sinatra singalike who delivers I Get a Kick and World on a String in true Sinatra style. The third member of the team is loveable Ray Caruana with a bullet head and a humorous face who brings his own interpretation to Ol' Man River

The band are magnificent with some expert piano playing by Andy Rumble, the musical director, on percussion baby faced James O'Carroll with Matt Elliott on double bass and some exceptional horn playing by David Horniblow – and I'm told it is his real name – who woos us on tenor sax, clarinet and flute.

*Until September 13.*

ALINE WAITES