

Stage show is simply divine

STRICTLY Come Dancing judge Craig Revel Horwood deserves a perfect ten for his direction of musical comedy *Sister Act* which opened at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, on Monday.

The show, an adaption of the 1992 film starring Whoopi Goldberg, is musical theatre at its very best.

The set is pure genius, the choreography dazzling and each of the performers not only acts, sings and dances but plays an instrument too.

Sadly, X Factor winner Alexandra Burke was unable to appear in the lead role on Monday because of illness, but stand-in Joanna Francis

was a treat as wannabe disco diva Deloris Van Cartier.

She looked the part, she acted the part, she can belt out a song and boy can she move. Her comic timing was perfect too.

Aaron Lee Lambert is great as her controlling gangster boyfriend Curtis, who surrounds himself with his "boys" who are all very funny characters and the source of much of the show's comedy.

He takes things too far when he discovers one of his boys is a police informer and shoots him.

It is a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time for Deloris who accidentally witnesses the murder and seeks the help of the cops.

Joe Vetch is wonderful as Sweaty Eddie, an officer who has had a crush on her since her school days.

He finds her sanctuary in a convent, home of a group of the most loveable nuns who are all great characters. This is where the fun really begins.

The brassy singer initially struggles to adapt to the humble ways of the convent. But she comes into her element when she takes charge of the choir and turns the group of tone deaf caterwauling nuns into a choir of angels.

The turn-around brings new hope for the struggling convent and its church and they discover they have finally hit the top with the announcement of a visit from the Pope.

All the nuns are fantastic. Karen Mann is wonderful as the strict-located long-suffering Mother Superior, Sister Mary Clarence, who is pushed to the limit by the singer and finally finds solace in a bottle of communion wine.

Sarah Cossin is delightful too as the shy postulant Sister Mary Robert who finally finds her voice.

The whole cast thoroughly deserved the lengthy applause at the end of a divine evening. The show runs until the end of next week. It would be a sin to miss it — **LAM.**



FORMER X Factor winner Alexandra Burke plays the lead role of Deloris Van Cartier in *Sister Act* at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham.



SISTER ACT is at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, until February 11.