

*National Operatic & Dramatic  
Association*

*South West Amateur Theatre Magazine*

**"A First-rate Opportunity"**

**AUTUMN 2009**

## PHIL BARNETT reports on District 1 (West Cornwall)

Production	Society
Jack and the Beanstalk	Carharrack Players
100 Stars for a 100 Years	Redruth Amateur Operatic Society Trust
Cinderella	Bray Theatre Company
Alice in Wonderland	Kidz R Us
Little Shop of Horrors	Kidz R Us
The Music Man	Redruth Amateur Operatic Society (Trust)
Dad's Army	KRU2

### **JACK AND THE BEANSTALK**

**Carharrack Players, Mills Hall, Carharrack 21<sup>st</sup> February**

*Director: Steve Payne Musical Director: Zoe Crouse*

I really enjoyed this panto written by Annette Hillman. All the cast were enthusiastic and obviously enjoying leading the audience up and down the Beanstalk. Margaret Dawes as Dame Polly Peasbody held the whole show together with great aplomb and skill. It's lovely when you see someone so at ease with an audience, who is able to have witty repartee with audience members and then return effortlessly to the script. Aiding and abetting her was Robert Dawes as Dick and Rose Dawes as Alice. Again these two were a fine comedy duo who worked brilliantly together and with Margaret. Julie Dower as Squire Hardnut, Rachel Payne and Linda Williams as Mop and Bucket, Ann Trebell as Jemma. Les Moulson as The Giant, Brenda Moulson as The Housekeeper and Ros Doherty all deserve a mention as each one played their roles with great enthusiasm and verve. Sophie Wear and Katie Turner as Jack and Jenny are good on the eye and have pleasing singing voices. Have a bit more confidence both of you as I think you have the ability to be really strong Principals in future roles (not that you were weak in these parts!). There was lots of audience participation and fun and the musical backing was perfect for the size of the hall.

**100 STARS FOR A 100 YEARS, Redruth Amateur Operatic Society Trust, Regal Theatre, Redruth, 19<sup>th</sup> March**

The outstanding impression left to me after the show was the fantastic singing all night long from many, many soloists and the ensemble. The society should feel proud to have such strength in depth. There were too many brilliant vocalists to mention them all. It was good, too, to see such a strong men's chorus. I felt that the show was 20 minutes too long, but not once was I bored. I say leave us wanting more rather than us thinking it's a bit too long. Many hours had gone into developing and rehearsing this show as part of the celebration of 100 years since the society was formed, and I am sure the other events planned will be as popular with the audience as this one was. The excerpt from "*The Music Man*" reminded us what great numbers there are in that show and I look forward to seeing it at The Minack. The band sounded fab and were nicely balanced with the soloists and ensemble. A great night out was had by all and a lot of very hard work went into the planning and execution, so well done to all the departments of the society.

**CINDERELLA, Bray Theatre Company, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2009**  
*Producer: Helen Richards Choreographers: Dawn Holdroff & Sophie Moses*  
*Musical Director: Irvin Herbert*

This was a traditional production, with their lavish sets, costumes and props providing all the impressive ingredients needed to transport the audience into the magical world of pantomime. This was community theatre at its best. From the warm welcome of the front of house team to the performance of the actors on stage, this pantomime exuded a warmth and a refreshing honesty, which I'm sure was in no small way was due in part to the sensitive hands of their first time producer, Helen Richards, whose obvious understanding of the Bray Theatre Co. ensured a good time was had by all. Some careful editing could have brought an earlier conclusion, but the enjoyment of the performers was infectious and was well received by their captivated audience. The Musical Director maintained a good pace throughout and sensitively supported ensemble and solo work, with a well balanced rounded sound. A special congratulations to the wardrobe team, Ann and Julie Angove, as the costumes were lavish and wonderfully coordinated throughout, which combined with their impressive choreography and Disney feel sets, filled the stage with a feast of colour and fun. The Bray Theatre Co possess something quite precious and quite unique in their approach to community theatre, which makes them quite a rare commodity in today's society and something which should be nurtured.

Although the society has suffered a recent severe financial setback because of episodes of vandalism to their rehearsal rooms, I am sure that any society with a heart as big as the Bray Theatre Co, will find a way to overcome their difficulties and continue to provide the kind of enchanting family entertainment that I experienced.

**ALICE IN WONDERLAND, Kidz R Us, St. Ives Theatre, July 2009**  
*Director: Peter Hutchinson, Choreographer: Rhona Cleland, Music: Katrina Geraghty, Sarah Hall, Pam Rudge*

**Carol Lee** reports:-

My many visits to this talented group have led me to expect nothing but the best and I cannot speak more highly of this production. A good pace was set from the start and as always every full stage number was choreographed to perfection. The discipline of this younger group was sustained throughout and above all was the sheer enjoyment showed by principals and chorus. This so well-known story was brought to life from the onset with Alice's fall down the rabbit hole and the pace never faltered. The stage throughout was a sea of colour, as too were all the costumes which lit up the stage. All of the principals, from the major roles to the smaller parts were established from the start and the action never faltered. As always costumes were superb, very colourful and worn well. Scenery and props were just right and all acting was put over with conviction in every case, be the roles large or small. This was particularly significant when one bears in mind that this was the junior section of Kidz. All acting showed maturity. This is a large stage to fill, but the entire production was beautifully staged, entrances and exits being accomplished with aplomb. Some lovely little vignettes, the Mad Hatter's Tea Party and the scene with the Queen of Hearts being notable. The musical backing was well in keeping never being intrusive. In company with many of the audience, I felt sad when it was over and do congratulate everyone concerned for the obviously hard work and planning which had gone into this very accomplished production.

**LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS , Kidz R Us, St. Ives Theatre, August 2009**  
*Director/Choreographer : Martyn Knight Musical Director : Rebecca Wynter*

**Carol Lee** reports:-

This is only the third time I have seen this musical in 26 years as a Regional Rep. Is this because of the technicalities of producing an Audrey 2, with the personality of a prima-donna? I don't know, but this particular production certainly pulled out all the stops, in every respect, making it a very competent and fast moving production. A very highly able cast, all confident in their roles, dancing chorus beautifully dressed, who filled the stage with their routines, lots of laughs and a great deal of fun, made this a really feel-good show, eminently suitable for seaside audiences. There was, in fact, a great deal of humour, albeit a little black, particularly in the dentist scene. This is, of course, a very off-beat musical, played of necessity a little tongue in cheek. Seymour has a veritable lion of a part and this young actor proved more than able to meet the challenges. His scenes with Audrey, his flower shop colleague, were played with sensitivity. Nice too, to see Phil in a key role which he played with great conviction. All minor roles were very well-cast and throughout the show, the atmosphere of that period was well maintained. A word here, for the small chorus who looked wonderful, sang well and generally played with an aplomb, not always evident in the older cast. Costumes as always with this company were superb and colourful and obviously the result of a great deal of thought. Musical backing was just right for this particular show. This was a very suitable choice for holiday audiences and this one certainly showed its approval at the end of what was a great fun evening.

**THE MUSIC MAN, Redruth Amateur Operatic Society (Trust), The Minack Theatre, 24<sup>th</sup> Aug**  
*Director: Paul Blaber Choreographer: Tanya Trerise Thomas Musical Director: Alistair Taylor*

Well done RAOST for presenting a little performed show – its great to see something different. “The Music Man” is most famous for the 1962 film starring Robert Preston. Here we had our own star of the show with Ben Oldfield as Harold Hill. Not once did his energy, characterisation and personality fail us. Ben’s warm interpretation included the audience in everything he did, looking like a seasoned vaudevillian throughout. The Buccas Four as the Quartet gave us another highlight of the show with their close harmony singing although occasionally their characterisation could have been a bit stronger. Karenza Richards as Marian Paroo sang beautifully. I felt that we never quite got to see enough of the depth of her personality even though there wasn’t anything wrong with her performance. Eulalie and her ladies gave us lots of light relief. A word of encouragement for Katy ( Zaneta )and Jack ( Tommy ) who showed lots of promise in both singing and acting. Chorus singing was very strong but there were too many blank faces during their numbers. All the other supporting roles acted and sang well with Sarah Howe as Mrs Paroo outstanding – I know she was perhaps a little young for the role but her acting skills made light of that fact – well done. Camborne Youth Band provided a fitting finale for us and added the right touch to the end of the show. The orchestra were really good throughout with a good balance with the soloists and chorus. Scene changes were quick and seamless. Costumes were colourful and worn well. A most enjoyable evening.

**DAD'S ARMY, KRU2, St. Ives Theatre, June 2009**  
*Director : Nick Simpson*

There is always a problem when producing a play which has been a popular television series. Should those involved try to emulate their T.V. roles, or make them their own. I am happy to say that in this particular production the latter course was taken. Action never flagged from the word go with the entrance of the entire corps from upstage launching us into the so familiar plot. The early scenes with the German captives was extremely funny, and accents very authentic. This group has the advantages of a large stage, of which full use was made. It was pleasing to see that all of the cast, even those with little or no dialogue had adopted a character which was sustained throughout. The appropriate music played between scenes worked very well. Costumes and props were very much in keeping and action never

flagged. Comedy lines, of which there were plenty, were at all times well pointed. It would have been easy to copy their television counterparts but this did not happen, each and every character creating his or her particular personality. One's overall impression was that this must have been great to rehearse, and will I know, provide excellent entertainment to all comers throughout the summer.

## **Youth Academy 2010, 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> April**

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*July 2010*

## **SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL AGM & AWARD CEREMONY**

**venue & date to be announced shortly**

*Please note the unusual date – moved to accommodate the National Conference.*

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to register your web-site & email addresses*

**YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2010 WILL BE DUE ON JANUARY 1<sup>st</sup>**

Invoices will be sent in December.

*Please pass to your Treasurer for immediate attention and save your volunteer Regional Representative a lot of extra work.*