

*National Operatic & Dramatic
Association*

South West Amateur Theatre Magazine

"A First-rate Opportunity"

AUTUMN 2009

CAROL LEE reports on District 2 (East & West Cornwall)

<u>Production</u>	<u>Society</u>
Carousel	Newquay Amateur Operatic Society
Oklahoma!	St. Austell Amateur Operatic Society
Dad's Army	RU2
Fussin' and a Feudin'!	Stage Struck Youth Theatre

CAROUSEL, Newquay Amateur Operatic Society, Tretherras School, April 2009

This well-known show, simply told, evokes many emotions in its audience and this production certainly pulled out all the stops. A simple opening set thronged with people setting the seal on this very competent production. All principals were well cast and at total ease in their roles. I liked the idea of having the children running in from the audience for this scene. Crowd scenes were very well managed bearing in mind the comparatively small stage. A word too for the consistency of the accents which were sustained extremely well. Costumes were colourful and in period, while the simple sets and props were more than adequate for each scene. A very well chosen cast maintained a high standard, resulting in a very well rounded show. The four piece musical backing was more than adequate for the size of the venue and rendered to perfection the well loved Richard Rodgers melodies, all of which were put over admirably. This was altogether a well rounded and polished production evoking from the audience all the extremes of emotion.

OKLAHOMA!, St. Austell Amateur Operatic Society, Keay Theatre, April 2009 *Director: Mark Cartier Choreographer: Rachel Michael Musical Director: Anna Minear*

This, the first of the Rodgers' mammoth musicals to reach London in the late forties, has long been a favourite of mine. This particular production had a lovely freshness about it which was sustained throughout. The atmosphere before curtain up was well created with the farmyard sounds and Aunt Eller going about her daily routine. Curly's entrance and his subsequently strong performance and his bandying of words with Laurey worked very well indeed. The set on movable boat trucks looked very authentic and scene changes were accomplished with a minimum of fuss. Costumes, in the case of the ladies very attractive, were in period, although I was not sure about Laurey's overalls. A word too for the dialogue of the principals where, without exception, very convincing accents were sustained. This was particularly apparent in the case of Ali Hakim who had to adopt a Middle-Eastern Accent which he did with aplomb. Hairstyles in some of the chorus ladies were perhaps a little too modern, but on the whole were in period. This production had a strong cast of principals, all of whom made a substantial contribution to the finished show. The Dream Ballet was beautifully executed and the unseen orchestra provided a sympathetic backing. Singing, both that of the soloists and company was of a high standard. An accomplished and very smooth running production as one had come to expect from this talented company.

DAD'S ARMY, RU2, 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.

FUSSIN' AND A FEUDIN' !, Stage Struck Youth Theatre, St. John's Hall, Penzance, July 2009
Director: Judith Nicholls Choreographer: Ruth Caird Musical Director: Kevin Lane

It is always a novelty to see a show totally unknown beforehand and Director, Judith Nicholls, is to be congratulated on finding this vehicle so suitable to the age group of its participants. A very attractive set (congratulations to those responsible for this, particularly for the extremely realistic pine trees, with authentic props) whetted the audience's appetite for what was to come. Nor were they disappointed as the action followed. The accents were very authentic, if at times a trifle indistinct, this being because of the size of the hall rather than any shortcomings on the part of the cast. This Director has a decided flair for positioning her entire cast, making full use of the rather large acting area and this was very apparent. Costumes were most authentic and at all time colourful. All the principals displayed great confidence, not always apparent in a young cast. A rather fragile plot, but nevertheless acted out with great confidence, particularly on the part of those in major roles. While not in the category of "*Oklahoma!*" this show had a great deal of charm and above all great enthusiasm on the part of all concerned. This was sustained throughout, making a concise and enjoyable show. I also enjoyed the harmony chorus singing at the end, amply backed by the sole accompanist, who had added a great deal to the production. Altogether a happy show leaving the audience with a feel-good feeling.

Youth Academy 2010, 6th - 9th April

If you are aged between 12 and 17 and you love theatre, this is the Academy for you.

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July 2010

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venue & date to be announced shortly

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

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Contact our membership secretary: nicklawrence@hotmail.com
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YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2010 WILL BE DUE ON JANUARY 1st

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.