

*National Operatic & Dramatic
Association*

South West Amateur Theatre Magazine

"A First-rate Opportunity"

AUTUMN 2009

DIANE GILCHRIST reports on District 7 (N.Devon)

Production	Society
Fiddler on the Roof	Barnstaple Amateur Operatic Soc
Anything Goes	Barnstaple Young Generation
Wizard of Oz	Braunton Productions
'Allo, 'Allo	Torrington Players

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, Barnstaple Amateur Operatic Society, Queen's Theatre, March 2009

Director: Alistair Donkin Musical Director : Malcolm Read

Carol Lee reports:-

A challenging opening with Tevye alone on the stage, but this actor's performance left one with no doubt that he was master of his house and family. His wife, Golde, showed that she was no pushover and their affection for each other was well-displayed in their duet, "Do you Love Me ?" This was a moving story of a family with friends like themselves steeped in tradition. That is until their younger daughter rocks the boat by falling in love with a Gentile. This particular scene was played with great poignancy and throughout the production, notwithstanding Tevye's rather amusing conversations with God, the underlying insecurity and threat of life-shattering news was well in evidence. All principals were well-cast and created a very moving and well rounded production. This is a very talented company which has the opportunity of staging a production in a splendid theatre. Acoustically it is good. Occasionally dialogue was a trifle indistinct but mainly vocal projection was good, both spoken and sung. Lots of humour, but an underlying seriousness makes this a superb show to do, giving everyone superb acting opportunities. Costumes were simple and the large orchestra provided a superb backing throughout. Scenery was simply effective. One final accolade. My congratulations to the bottle dancers, a nerve wracking experience played with aplomb. This was a superb production.

ANYTHING GOES, Barnstaple Young Generation, Queen's Theatre, May

Director : Kev Behan Choreographer : Kathy MacMillan Musical Director : Malcolm Read

This well known show with such wonderful music by Cole Porter seemed a strange choice for a youth group to perform, and unfortunately did not seem to attract the audiences that this very talented group deserves. Having questioned the choice of show I must say that all the cast played their parts extremely well, but in some cases were not believable in their characterisations, owing to their youth. Experience is something that only comes in time, and one or two of the cast were far too young for the parts they played, thereby detracting somewhat from the story. The outstanding performances came from Reno Sweeney (Charlotte Hayre) Moonface Martin (Steven Humphreys) and Erma (Charlotte Redman), but all of the players are to be congratulated on helping to make this show so enjoyable. The highlight for me was the "Blow, Gabriel Blow" number and I'm sure this would have put many adult societies to shame for the exuberance and enthusiasm shown by the cast. The set was excellent, as was the lighting. The costumes were very glitzy and generally appeared just right for the period. The choreography for the chorus numbers was good, but in a couple of the principal numbers it became very repetitive and looked rather like a beginners tap class. The band was good, although at times was rather too loud, but the music is so well known that it was a pleasure to hear it performed so well.

THE WIZARD OF OZ, Braunton Productions, Queen's Theatre, Barnstaple, 9th July

*Director: Jake Goodenough Choreographers: Hayley Grebby, Sarah King, Stacey Dorman
Musical Director: Malcolm Read*

The story must be one of the best known ever, and most of the songs from this show are still and will be sung for many years to come. The method chosen to find their Dorothy (very novel; but rather like “X Factor”) certainly paid off and what a find she was. It also brought them lots of publicity and interest from the general public. Without exception the main characters played their parts well, and it would be unfair to select one performance in particular as they were well cast and worked as a team. The singing was first-class and only occasionally did the dialogue seem underplayed. The Munchkins were extremely well disciplined and it was good to see such confidence and stage presence in the younger members of the society. The chorus had very little to do, but they certainly lived it up in the “Jitterbug” and “The Emerald City” numbers. In both these scenes the stage did look slightly overcrowded, but the choreography was good and allowed everyone their own space; albeit very small. The sets were good, although scene changes were rather prolonged at times, but the excellent orchestra kept the audience happy during the unavoidable gaps. The costumes were excellent and the lighting and special effects (especially in the Storm Scene) were superb. Although I am not an advocate of personal mics, the effects created by the very talented sound engineer enhanced the performance. Full marks to this society for having the courage of the Lion, the heart of the Tinman, and the brain of the Scarecrow to provide North Devon audiences with a show that was both innovative and entertaining to all ages.

'ALLO, 'ALLO, Torrington Players, Plough Arts Centre, Torrington, 14th May

Directors: Matt Siggs & Gemma Armishaw

This stage version of the popular television series relates the story of the painting of The Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies, and was extremely well performed. All the actors maintained their accents and stuck rigidly to the characterisations that we have come to know and love so well. It would be unfair to name any individuals, as everyone was so good. Obviously a lot of hard work had gone into this production. The set was minimalistic, but scene changes provided some problems as they were many and did delay the action somewhat. Also the young man helping did rather irritate with his continuous antics at the end of each scene change. The lighting was good, and the special effects in the cinema scene were excellent, as was the acting of the two characters involved in this scene. The costumes were good, and props (apart from the telephone which was rather modern) were spot on. My congratulations to all who took part, and especially to the successful co-directors. Hopefully the success of the production will encourage them to continue in this sphere.

Youth Academy 2010, 6th - 9th April

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

Join us at Oakham School, Rutland to build confidence, learn new techniques, develop skills, make friends and most importantly have fun whilst you learn! NODA Youth Academy 2010 will offer two Musical Theatre courses, covering a range of popular West End shows, and one Drama Skills course to equip young actors with all the skills they need for the stage.

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July 2010

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venue & date to be announced shortly

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SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL WEBSITE

www.nodasw.com

Information about SW Noda activities and our own "What's on" page.

*Contact our membership secretary: nicklawrence@hotmail.com
to register your web-site & email addresses*

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.