

***National Operatic & Dramatic
Association
South West Amateur Theatre
Magazine***

“Open a New Window”

SPRING 2010

JANET ELWORTHY reports on District 6

After the success of last year's District Meeting held at the Guildhall, Axminster at the kind invitation of Axminster A.O.S. Janet plans to hold a similar meeting this year at Sidmouth. Look out for news of this valuable “get together” to be announced when a date has been finalised.

The Merry Widow	Tiverton Amateur Operatic Society
A Streetcar Named Desire	Sidmouth A. D. S.
The Pirates of Penzance	S. A. C. O. S.
My Fair Lady	Axminster A. O. S.
It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas	Willow Tree Theatre company
Babes in the Wood	Sidmouth A. D. S.

THE MERRY WIDOW

Tiverton Amateur Operatic Society

The New Hall

Director: Steven Fox Choreographer: Kathy Macmillan Musical Director: Steven Fox

September 2009

This light comic operetta by Franz Lehar doesn't differ very much from the farcical plot of any other operetta, with its troupe of cheating wives and philandering husbands. Having missed the first ten minutes due to transport difficulties, a hastened arrival, masked by darkness and enthusiastic applause found the cast in full flow. Eyes were fixed on lavish, stylish costumes, attentive hair dressing along with an abundance of men. So far so good. Chorus sounded balanced and rounded with pleasing touches of harmony squeezing through, all performed with lovely facial expression. True to its title, our heroine was indeed a merry 'Merry Widow', captivating with a flirty edge, singing pleasantly. Unfortunately sentimentality was forfeited in favour of grandeur and comedy, with the relationship between Anna and Danilo never really igniting and other amorous entanglements lacking passion. The harassed Baron Zeta (Tony Grosse) was certainly the man of the evening, although it's questionable whether his harassment was due to acting or fishing for his next line. Even so, his unrestrained, natural sense of comedy without doubt gave a lift to the show. This must have been a rewarding production for the hard working director, obvious enjoyment enthusing from cast and audience.

NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & AWARD CEREMONY

Palace Hotel, Torquay

Saturday 25th September 2010 @ 2:00 p.m.

*Your attendance is expected
on the occasion of the inauguration of

our very own Gerry Branton
as National President*

*Brochures & Booking Forms arrive with
“Theatre Business” – Noda’s National Magazine*

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society

The Manor Pavilion

Director: David Harrison October

Jo Wilson-Hunt reports:-

In the director's notes, David said that this was an ambitious production, and it certainly was. The scene was set on entering the auditorium. A setting that truly set the time, place and emotion of the piece, enhanced by well-chosen costumes and lit to great effect. This story has recurring themes, the reflection of old America and the thriving new America of the immigrants, and the constant conflict between reality and fantasy, actual and ideal. On the whole this was realised on opening night, but the cruelty and violence portrayed was mild and the build up of emotions sizzled instead of exploded, possibly not helped by the long scene changes when only small set props seemed to be added or removed. This is a very wordy play and at times the accents caused important lines to be lost, but the actors grabbed this difficult piece of theatre and ran with it and deserve great praise especially Blanche, Stella and Mitch who really captured the essence of their characters. They certainly took the Sidmouth audience on an emotional streetcar ride with twists, turns and the odd collision along the way.

NODA Summer School, Loughborough
some places still available!

contact: antonia@noda.org.uk

MY FAIR LADY Axminster Operatic Society The Guildhall, Axminster

Director: Rose Wigmore Choreographer: Jan Carter Musical Director: Rob Preece. November 2009

It's a miracle this production ever made it to the stage with the myriad of catastrophe's it endured. Lost director, principal back-outs, the list goes on. However, the strength of the society shone through and won the day along with the help of some local, renowned directors, who stepped into the breach and helped contrive a creditable, extremely watchable show. An accomplished contribution was made by the orchestra, whose high standard of musicianship and well balanced combination was keenly controlled, supporting the strong principal singing which produced some of the best moments in the show. Chorus singing possessed musicality but appeared reticent within the small group harmony numbers. A strong, talented group of principals worked hard to develop their contrasting characters, building a believable relationship within the confines of the storyline. Eliza (Alex McCallum), as fair as the title suggests, managed to successfully portray her metamorphosis, although there was potential, with guidance, for the chasm to be widened further. It was refreshing to see long standing members of the society taking principal roles for the first time, competently earning their stage space. A stylish finale with cast dressed once again in their finery, was a fitting ending to a creditable show.

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Sidmouth Arts Club Operatic Society

The Manor Pavilion

Director: Alec Fellows-Bennett Choreographer: Evelyn O'Malley Musical Director: Roger Howell.

October 2009

This production enabled me to look at Gilbert and Sullivan from a completely different aspect. For the first time, practically every word that came out of the actors' mouths could be heard and understood, every joke laughed at. Was this the G&S I have occasionally struggled to enjoy in the past? From the start the audience were drawn in, as the pirates bounded on the stage with enough energy to light a small town. Inspired staging encouraged the lively cast to perform the essence of the story with deliberation, while having the best time ever. It has been quoted that G&S dies by its chorus, rather than its leads, neither had any intention of kicking the bucket in this production. Everyone had their own personality which you could not fail to love, from the eloquent young Frederic (Sean Mulkerrin) and his warm Mabel (Grace McNeil) to the most hilarious, mixed sex troupe of constabulary seen this side of a Scotland Yard's Christmas party. All delivered nothing less than a first class performance. Vocal contribution was without doubt of comparable excellence, although it was noted that harmony drifted, particularly during 'Hail Poetry', by no means a slight on a powerful performance, merely a surprising observation on an otherwise thoroughly rehearsed production.

18th July 2010

SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL AGM & AWARD CEREMONY

Holiday Inn, Taunton 10:45 a.m.

Special Guest: Mrs. Margaret Coltman, President of Noda.

Lunch also available at £12 a head.

Order in advance: send a cheque to Denis Branton made payable to Noda South-West.

“Holly Woods”, 89 Stone Lane, Winterbourne Down, South Gloucestershire BS36 1DH

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SWEENEY TODD The Jersey Green Room Club Arts Centre

Director: Alastair Walkinshaw Musical Staging: Gabrielle Robbé Musical Director: Tim Evans

Finding myself on a jolly jaunt to Jersey induced a long overdue visit to one of the four NODA societies who reside there, one of whom happened to be staging a production at that time: unfortunately, opening on the day I left. An invitation to the dress rehearsal was much appreciated. Technical quandaries resulted in an impromptu tech rehearsal, with the dress rehearsal being the afternoon of opening night. Phew! Talk about riding close to the wind. Further difficulties allowed me only the pleasure of watching one scene. Wow, what a scene it was! An accurate, unified chorus, spectacular staging and principals with definite star quality who could grace a professional stage with ease. My loss was surely Jersey's gain. Any future excursion to this Isle will certainly see me scuttling back for more.

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

Willow Tree Theatre Company The New Hall, Tiverton

Director: Jon Snowden Choreographer: Debbie Shearman Musical Director: Nick Lawrence

December 2009

This festive production captured the Christmas spirit with its charming storyline and convincing performances. Based on the much loved film 'Miracle On 34th Street', it originally played on Broadway under the title "Here's Love". The overture presented relatively unfamiliar numbers, but the upbeat tempo from the well prepared, small band, gave them an easy listening quality. A group renown for spectacular sets and effects did not disappoint. The originality and 'wow' factor of the Macy's balloon travelling over the audience's heads and the clever revolving set was a valuable asset, giving the scene changes the fluidity needed to keep the scenes flowing. Despite principal performers giving it their best shot, the children stole the show. A stunning performance from up-and-coming young actress Emily Searle (Susan Walker) showed natural talent. Along with her mother, Doris Walker (Victoria Baldwin) and Fred Gaily (Leon Searle), all three fashioned an evident, firm American family feel. The shop assistants' rendition of 'Plastic Alligator' was very comical, bubbly and bouncy performed with energy;

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it was a favourite moment of the show. Kris Kringle, (Adrian Garland) may not have totally convinced us of his character, but his scene with Hendrika, the little Dutch girl, (Esta Felix) was touching and delightful. This enchanting show could not fail to enhance the Christmas mood for the audience.

BABES IN THE WOOD Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society Manor Pavilion

Director: Heather Hodge Choreographer: Geraldine Barnett Musical Director: John Griswold

January 2010

A well chosen, refreshingly different script from a new company, Limelight, that included lots of funny, topical jokes and a good number of interesting characters. Songs were appropriate and short except for an entertaining, alternative version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas", complete with props, which contained 'four Barbie dolls' and 'nine mobile phones' amongst other equally nonsensical days. Pantomime gives artistic license for O.T.T. big time in the costume and make-up department, as shown with the thoughtfully co-ordinated, bright costumes on display. Make-up, however, was strangely conspicuous by its absence on some characters, particularly the excellent Sheriff (Gavin Haines), whose evil, scary demeanour could only have been endorsed further by heavier usage. A wonderful rapport between cast and audience ensued with Marc Colson (Hayrick) leading the way with a terrific sense of fun. A confident performance by Ashley Leeds (Nursie) with her outrageous outfits, a King with Bruce Forsyth written all over him and the best looking, glamorous 'Merry Maids' ever seen. One of the best features of this enjoyable show had to be the babes asleep in the wood scene. The use of life like Fox and Owl puppets, atmospheric lighting and enchanting music came together to create a magic, mesmerising picture that held the audience spellbound. This was a creative, fun filled production.

PANTOCRIME TIPPS Juniors Tipton St. John

My apologies for not being able to attend this production. I hear it went well.

ROBIN HOOD Axminster Drama Club The Guildhall, Axminster

Director: Phillipa Glanville Choreographer: Sara Leat Musical Director: Rob Preece January 2010

Year upon year this group produce some of the most innovative scenery and effects seen in the area with copious attention to detail, this production being no exception. All lovingly contrived from start to finish in their own workshops behind the hall. Combine that with the script writing talents of local member Chris Lane and you have a force to be reckoned with. A large strong cast, under the guidance of a first time director, worked the stage to the best of their abilities, all giving 100% on this first night performance. First rule of pantomime: use the sweetest, youngest members of your cast, dress them as little mice, choreograph a cute routine and use them for all they are worth. It really works. Amah! A topical Strictly Come Dancing sequence was very humorous and received well by the audience, only just eclipsed by the scene unveiling a mass exodus of characters through a dungeon door into beautifully painted woodland, accompanied by music taken from Harry Potter and lit to perfection. Magical. Okay, sometimes the stage was brimming to capacity, energy levels needed lifting and staging was a tad old

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hat, however, this paled into insignificance compared with the charm and endeavour cascading from the stage.

IMPROBABLE FICTION	Torrington Players	The Plough
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Director: Liz Harris

20th November 2009

Alan Ayckbourn is a very prolific playwright with this being his 69th play, and as fans of Ayckbourn know, nothing is quite as it appears. The story in this case revolves around a group of would be writers and the problems they encounter en route to possible fame. Once again this very talented group provided an excellent evening's entertainment. All the players without exception were actors of great ability and each played their part with much style and panache. The change in characters as the play progressed was incredible and the costume quick changes, coupled with the change of accents was amazing and were sustained throughout. I thought the malapropisms of the space travellers were hilarious and must have provided a great deal of fun and frustration at rehearsals. The set was good, I loved the arm at the end of the telephone, and costumes were excellent as were the lighting and sound effects. A superb production and congratulations go to the Director and cast alike for a worthwhile visit to the Plough. And as the chairman of the writers group reminded us, 'it's always good to end on a song'. So long may Torrington Players keep singing!

<p>Don't Forget</p> <p>You can <i>only</i> be nominated for one of the South-West Region's prestigious awards if you invite your Regional Representative and/or the Councillor to attend your show.</p> <p>Contact your Representative as early as you can.</p> <p>As volunteers to the Association they have other lives away from Noda.</p>
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Paul Harris Advert 30.05.08 saved on email

NODA NATIONAL AGM & PRESIDENTIAL GALA 2010

The Palace Hotel, Torquay,

24th – 26th September 2010

Put these dates in your diary and join us for a fun-filled few days
when our Regional Councillor, Gerry Branton becomes National President of NODA.

In such picturesque surroundings, rooms overlooking the gardens are at a premium so early bookings for more than one night are recommended, as rooms will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

*****Option A Saturday – Sunday: £140*****

Sat. Lunch. AGM, Afternoon Tea, Presidential Banquet & Ball, with Guest Speaker, **Chris Harris**, International performer, writer and director, followed by Dancing to **Pop of Ages** and Cabaret by award-winning Bath society: **Zenith Youth Theatre**, Accommodation.

Sun: Breakfast – (Meetings for Regional Reps & Council.) Optional Lunch.

Theatrical Traders Exhibition

*****Option B Friday – Sunday: £220*****

Fri. Dinner followed by **70's Night Disco with "Johnny Inferno" & Swing-Singer Tom Carpenter**, come dressed in your best 70's gear and join in the fun!

Cabaret by East Devon's own Youth Theatre Group: **Centre Stage of Exmouth.**

Accommodation. Sat. – Breakfast, Morning Coffee

Optional Coach Tour of Torbay - 10.00am – 12.30pm £10 pp. Lunch, then rest of day as Option A

*****Option C Saturday – Lunch, AGM, Afternoon Tea: £18*****

*****Option D Saturday – Presidential Banquet & Ball - £40*****

*****Option E Sunday Lunch - £16*****

*****Option F Additional Nights: Dinner B & B (Thurs / Sun) £65*****

Prices per person. All prices inclusive of VAT.

All Hotel facilities are available for guests, including Fitness Suite, Indoor & Outdoor Pools, 9-Hole Golf, Tennis & Squash Courts, Croquet Lawn, 25 acres of superb gardens and woodland, Terrace.

Local attractions – Torquay Operatic Society (TOPS) are performing "Beauty & the Beast" that week at The Princess Theatre for Thursday arrivals. Model Village at Babbacombe Nearby Anstey's Cove

Shopping (Local 'bus passes hotel) Free Parking. Hotel Postcode: **TQ1 3TG**

All bookings on official forms which will arrive with your Theatre Business Magazine

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to SW Treasurer: **Mr R. Wright, Old Orchard, 57 Overleigh, STREET, Somerset BA16 0TJ Tel: 01458 442 033 E-mail: overleigh@aol.com**

Payment Options A, B & F (Residential) A non-refundable deposit of £50 per person is required when booking. All other options require full payment at time of booking. Cheques to be made payable to **National Operatic and Dramatic Association.**

Balance of payment for Options A, B & F due by **31st August 2010.**

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