

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S

CAROUSEL

MUSIC BY RICHARD RODGERS

BOOK AND LYRICS BY OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II



BASED ON FERENC MOLNAR'S PLAY "LILION"
AS ADAPTED BY BENJAMIN F. GLAZER
ORIGINAL DANCES BY AGNES DE MILLE

31st Oct - 4th Nov 2017

at The Rhoda McGaw Theatre, Woking

Evenings 7:30pm & Sat Matinée 2:30pm

Box Office on 07765 006565 or <http://waos.info/tickets>

An amateur production by arrangement with R&H Theatricals Europe

CAROUSEL
NOVEMBER 2017
WOKING AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

'Carousel' has one of the greatest scores ever composed for a musical. The songs are either bursting with energy and life or full of romance and affection, and of course the anthem 'You'll never walk alone' is one of the most beloved of all show tunes. It promises hope despite the deep sadness at a time of loss, and was Richard Rodgers's favourite score.

The set was good and the deep steps stage left afforded an opportunity to create interesting settings using the different levels, as did the 'boardwalk' at the back of the stage. Aunt Nettie's house was fine except that when the door opened the flat behind was clearly on view. The backcloth of the sea was unusual for this show and worked in linking the story to the waterfront and beach.

The opening scene was full of life and I liked the idea of a Carousel which was operated by the back stage crew. The long and beautifully played overture was enjoyable both aurally and visually.

Having worked with Rob and being familiar with the roles that he usually plays, namely in operetta, I wondered how well he would make the transition to a 'modern' musical and to playing such a different type of person. However he put across the character of Billy Bigelow, the strutting confident fairground barker, very well indeed - despite his rather young and 'un-lived-in' countenance! There were a couple of difficult notes to hit but his singing was strong and his diction was faultless. A little more reaction was needed when Julie told him that she was pregnant - it was not the special moment it should have been. The duet with Julie 'If I loved You' was superb.

For her stage debut with WAOS, Elizabeth Snowdon-Reeve was first rate as Julie Jordan, the simple mill-girl bowled over by the carousel barker. She was vulnerable but had a quiet strength, clearly loved Billy unconditionally and was prepared to accept the flaws in his nature. Her singing was excellent.

As her friend Carrie, Victoria Percival gave a fine performance. She was full of fun, her timing for the comedy was spot on and her singing was very good. The scene with both girls, when deciding who should stay with Billy, was beautifully staged and acted and I loved the scene in which she described to Julie her experience of the theatre.

Sam made a suitably blowsy Mrs Mullin coming across strongly as the Carousel owner, but I felt a little more could have been made of her undoubted attraction to the younger man Billy and their symbiotic relationship. Nevertheless she gave her usual sound and watch-able performance.

The 'Clambake' was a good number and the business with Jigger and Carrie was very funny. ('This was a real nice clambake was originally written for 'Oklahoma!' and was entitled 'This was a real nice hayride').

In the role of Jigger, the bad influence in Billy's rather troubled life, Mark was deeply sinister and definitely not to be argued with in his plans for the robbery of Mr. Bascombe. His slicked back hair and demeanour made him a threatening presence and he played the part most convincingly. The business of demonstrating the fireman's lift to a gullible (or hopeful?) Carrie momentarily showed another side to Jigger's creepy character.

June was a lovely Aunt Nettie; caring and yet business-like when she needed to be. The minutes after Billy's death were beautifully acted and June's rendition of 'When you Walk Through a Storm' was very moving – I had a tear in my eye.

The charming and slightly eccentric Enoch Snow was absolutely safe in the hands of Matthew Gardner who, despite looking rather young for the role, carried it off with aplomb. His singing of 'When the Children are Asleep' was super.

Brian Higgs was good in both the parts he played and I especially liked him as the relaxed Starkeeper. 'Heaven' was artistically created with lights and stars.

Those members of the company playing the remaining characters acquitted themselves well and supported the principals - as did the whole company. Chorus singing was good, the dancing was performed with confidence and the children on stage added to the overall feeling of a real community.

Stage groupings were attractive and the choreography was pleasing to the eye but the routine for the girls dressed as Eastern Beauties wasn't at all Eastern.

'Clambake' was set well and the choreography in 'June' was effective. The ballet was good and Julia Da Costa was charming in the role of Louise.

There was very little drama in the moment of Billy's death, in fact I didn't even realise it had happened, but in contrast his return to earth and his presence at the Graduation ceremony was a commendable scene and beautifully acted by the leads involved in it. The business with the star was very moving.

The numerous smaller Snow children were charming and Rhiannon and James were assured as Hannah and Enoch. Loved all the pink dresses!

Costumes were suitable for the piece (Carries blouse was rather too tight) and hair-styles were appropriate.

Accents were mostly good and the pace and energy-level were consistent.

Backstage crew worked quickly and quietly and as members of the cast fitted in nicely, but when they were clearing/setting scenes as crew they would have looked better without white arms/sleeves. They just stood out in the darkness.

Your programme is comprehensive and well presented.



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The production team of the three ladies, Lorraine, Laura and Hannah put together an extremely enjoyable musical and I had a great evening. Thank you for inviting me to see 'Carousel' – as always it was a pleasure to see one of your productions and to meet the cast on stage afterwards. It was also good to have an opportunity to speak to Lorraine during the interval.

E. Gloria Smith

N.O.D.A. South East Regional Representative – District 12