



## WOKING AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

### CAROUSEL

NOVEMBER 2007

With an outstanding score and lyrics, 'Carousel' contains songs ranging from the melodic 'If I loved you', in which Billy and Julie depict a growing affection, through to the wonderfully rousing 'Blow high blow low'. 'June is bustin' out all over' and the famous anthem 'You'll never walk alone' sung by Nettie and Julie are particularly well known to the audience, and having been in the show twice myself it was difficult not to join in from time to time!

The famous 'Carousel waltz', which opens the show, was beautifully played by the orchestra and as John Whelan conducted the same show in March he was more than familiar with the music. He controlled the volume of the musicians beautifully so that everyone could be clearly heard during the underscoring, but I did feel that a couple of numbers were played rather more slowly than is usual. Chorus singing was good and the men's 'Blow high blow low' was super.

Emma Culley did very well in her first full direction, with good stage groupings and plenty of business in the chorus numbers.

I liked Billy's fall off the steps onto the sacks, and also the way she overcame not having a carousel on stage with the cast 'boarding' the carousel as they moved off stage.

The opening presents a huge challenge but generally speaking it worked well. The fairground performers were good, especially Gillian Freeman competently spinning a plate on a stick, but a little more involvement from the bystanders and general movement around the stage would have made for a busier scene. The graduation scene was a very moving one.

The Stage Productions set was good and the props were suitably chosen. I liked the Starkeeper scene, and the sparseness of the stage for Billy and Jigger's confrontation with Mr. Bascombe created a feeling of the impending violence.

In the role of Billy, Kevin Sampson gave a very good performance. He was strutting and aggressive with an occasional flash of real charm so that it was easy to see why all the girls fell for him. He handled the long

Soliloquy admirably, but probably because of his youth it wasn't quite as emotional a rendition as it might have been.

Tracy Sorgiovanni was a perfect Julie; an innocent, in awe of Billy but she also showed a quiet strength and her singing was first rate.

The spirited Carrie was played with enthusiasm by Nicola Morrin, whom I suspect is a dancer as she moved beautifully. Her singing voice was pleasant but there were one or two flat notes early on in the show.

Larissa Street made a smouldering Mrs. Mullin, an interpretation I've not seen before, and she did it very well. Her feelings for Billy were indisputable, but oddly Billy didn't appear to have any affection for her.

As Julie's Aunt Nettie, Harriet Graves acted and sang strongly. What a pity she's moving away, I imagine that the society will be sorry to lose her.

Enoch Snow's entrance song is not an easy one but Geoff Morris coped well with it and continued firmly as the rather eccentric fish merchant. The girls' reactions on his entrance were excellent.

Taking the part of the 'baddie' of the piece Phil Street made a superb Jigger Craigin. He was sly, greedy, rough, tough and manipulative and he gave a magnetic performance.

The choreography of the Ballet was good and prettily danced by Hayli Chappell playing Louise.

'Clambake' (originally written for 'Oklahoma!' as 'This was a real nice hay-ride') was attractively set as was 'June' and Helen Buick's choreography was pleasing.

Roger Thomas in the dual roles of The Starkeeper and Dr Seldon gave good characterisations of each, and Norman Holden's Mr. Bascombe was nicely interpreted.

The smaller roles taken by the cast were all executed with confidence and the children were fetching if not all that polished in movements.

Costumes were good with noticeable attention to detail such as the old -fashioned braces and white tights. The only costume that was unsuitable was the 1920's style dress worn by the Heavenly Friend.

Julie did not have a wedding ring on view, perhaps Billy couldn't afford one, but in that case he wouldn't have had one either and he was wearing a signet ring.

Make up was rather mixed with one or two of the ladies heavily made up and others apparently wearing very little.

Lighting and sound complemented the well-presented production.

Your programme cover, as always, is most original and the contents are interesting to read. I didn't see an advertisement for your next production but whatever it is I shall look forward to seeing it next March.

Everyone involved in the show played their part to make it a success and they are to be congratulated. It was a very good show and I enjoyed meeting the cast on stage afterwards and both directors during the interval.

Front of House staff were efficient, thank you Roger for looking after my guest and I so well, and also for inviting me to see 'Carousel'.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and 2008.

**E. Gloria Smith**

**NODA South East Regional Representative District 12**