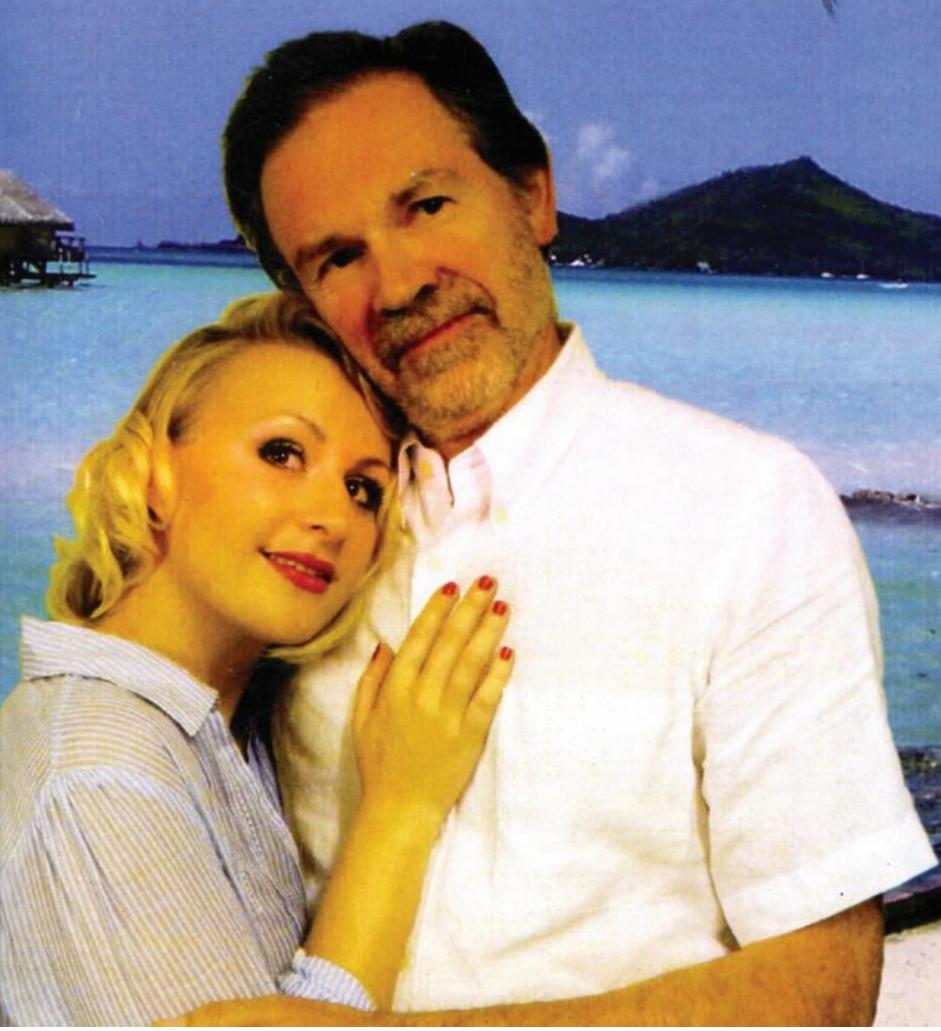




WAOS PRESENTS  
 RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S  
 SOUTH PACIFIC



9 - 13 November 2010

	WORKING	
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**WOKING AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY**  
**SOUTH PACIFIC**  
**NOVEMBER 2010**

Of all the wonderful musicals written by Rodgers and Hammerstein, 'South Pacific' surely has the lion's share of the best-known songs. They range from exuberant and lusty right through the gamut to sentimental; but rather surprisingly there is only a nod at the South Seas flavour in 'Bali Hai'.

The action on stage during the overture didn't detract at all from the orchestral presentation, and full marks to Christopher Peters for accepting the challenge, as some MD's are a little jealous about 'sharing' the overture. Under his guidance the accompaniment to the musical numbers was played sensitively throughout the show. For one so young he shows a good understanding of the needs of the performers and, unusually, even the underscored dialogue was completely audible. The musicians were dressed in keeping with the setting but one man was not wearing a hat.

The 'freeze' gradually evolved naturally to set the scene for the opening of the show, and the two children followed up with a charming rendition of 'Dites a moi'.

Charlie Bevan playing Jerome acted confidently, especially as it was his first acting role, and as Ngana, Eleanor Haggarty was bright and animated although she had a tendency to look out into the audience.

Claire Harvey was first class as Nellie Forbush and she displayed her emotions superbly. Although overawed on meeting Emile, a successful planter with a lovely home, (completely different from the men back in Little Rock!) her small town bigotry came into play and threatened their relationship when she met his children who were of mixed race.

As Emile de Becque, Keith Kinnell's acting was excellent. He was completely natural and made the perfect French gentleman. His singing voice was praiseworthy and appeared effortless, but occasionally pitching was not absolutely accurate. The chemistry between the two leads was obvious and made for a totally credible relationship.

In the role of Bloody Mary June Saich was good but I felt needed to be a much bigger, louder character. She was after all used to dealing with a rowdy bunch of marines and was a wheeler-dealer of no mean status. I felt her costumes were not as in keeping with the character as they might have been, and that something more 'native' would have added to the comedy in the role.

Liat was played sympathetically by Ryn Joyes, who sang beautifully. The hand movements in the traditionally set 'Happy Talk' could have been more exaggerated.

Kevin Sampson, whose acting and vocal ability were strong, played Lieutenant Joe Cable with just the right amount of humour, and his feelings for Liat were expressed with sensitivity. His accent was sound.

On this his second outing Peter Howitt acquitted himself well as Luther Billis but needed more consistency in his accent.

Brian Higgs and Clive Moon were absolutely convincing as Captain Brackett and Commander Harbison and had good accents plus suitably imposing attitudes for their senior positions. The scene with Joe (discussing age differences between men and women) was especially funny.

As Hannah the housekeeper, Nina Frearson displayed a gentle and compassionate character when dealing with the motherless children.

The concert scene was well handled and of course the men's 'Honey Bun' was great fun. I liked the way the marines represented different characters too.

Lorraine Landon's choreography was very good with plenty of variation in style, and the chorus were well rehearsed in the routines.

Sound effects were realistic and the lighting plot very good indeed. The lighting changes for the time lapse worked for me, but I wonder if it was as apparent to the audience who are not so familiar with technical effects.

The revolving set adapted easily to the different locations, and the back stage crew dressed as military worked efficiently and quietly.

Props were suitable and created the ambience of the various locations.

All of the musical numbers were well performed but I particularly enjoyed the dynamics in 'I'm gonna wash that man', the rousing 'There is nothing like a dame' and the men's routine in 'Bloody Mary'.

Costumes were super with just one or two negatives. Some of the girl's white blouses were too tight and looked about to burst open, Nellie's being the most noticeable, and Cable just wasn't smart enough. He looked rather scruffy for a young officer and a jacket would have helped give him authority. The dog tags and tee shirts were perfect with the variety of jeans and cut offs, but Billis' trousers were too long.

Most of the ladies hairstyles were right for the period but a couple were too modern. Nellie's was not of the period and had a tendency to cover her eyes.

Make up was a little mixed (some of the girls were very pale and others not) and Nellie's eyes were too heavily made up (false eyelashes?) One of the marines had blusher on – before 'Honey bun'!

Thank you Martine for your explanation of what you were trying to achieve in your direction of 'South Pacific'. It was helpful, and I think you achieved what you set out to do. You used the cast in the best possible way to suit the variety of ages on stage, so that nobody looked out of place by wearing an unsuitable costume. Your direction was extremely good and added something extra to the rather more traditional staging of 'South Pacific'.

The programme is well presented and has all the necessary information along with some interesting information regarding the hierarchy in the American Navy.

'South Pacific' was an impressive production and my guest and I enjoyed a thoroughly good evening's entertainment. Thank you for inviting me and for the hospitality shown to me on the evening.

**E. Gloria Smith**

**NODA South East Regional Representative District 12**