

Sheffield City Opera - La Boheme (Report by Julie Webb)

Director Ed Bancroft

Musical Director Terry Hobson

The second year at the University Drama Studio and the company look very much 'at home'. Excellent ticket sales proved that the audiences are appreciating their efforts. Congratulations Terry on your sixty years of experience with amateur societies and choirs. This was evident as once again he had the orchestra beautifully controlled. All the soloists were in great form vocally and in character. Although the settings were simple everyone worked well within them and the chorus made much better use of the space in this production. Ed Bancroft's direction gave zest and pace when required and also enticed real emotion from his cast in the final scene. A standing ovation on the first night said it all.

Splinters Theatre Group - 42nd Street

Director Mark Harris

Musical Director Hugh Finnigan

Choreographer Carla Jane Wade

This show to me is a "feel good factor show" and the audience definitely came out of the theatre with that feeling. Approximately two hours of discipline, sheer exuberance and enjoyment came over the footlights from the cast, not one of them over 30. The production team certainly came up with the goods – Mark's direction was excellent, Carla's choreography certainly got those feet dancing, and to see Hugh on stage was quite a treat! Having been one of the "founding" people who had the foresight in 1989 to form an amateur theatre company for young people, it was with great pride that I watched this production. Congratulations to all concerned, on your 20th anniversary.

Intake Methodist Musical Society - Strictly Intake

Musical Director Monica Eyley

Accompanist Peter Waring

As usual a very varied programme from Gilbert & Sullivan, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice to Classical Pops and World War II songs. Judy and John Savournin's solos – "I want to sing in opera" and "The Absent-Minded Beggar" respectively and Gwen Knight's "The Wind beneath my Wings" were excellent. "The Sleeping Beauty Waltz" played by Peter Waring was a delight to listen to, as was his accompaniment throughout the evening.

Dronfield Light Opera Group - Pickwick

Director/Choreographer Andrea Powell

Musical Director Tom Owen

I think it is a shame that this show isn't performed more regularly as it has "catchy" music, many principal and minor parts, together with plenty of chorus work. The minimal scenery worked really well, although I feel that some of the short scenes would have worked better in front of tabs. The principals did very well with their solos, duets and ensemble singing. The orchestra was great under the direction of Tom Owen. He kept the volume of the orchestra down as necessary, and it was good to hear part-singing from the chorus. Again, attention to detail was lacking with regard to costumes and properties.

Southey Musical Theatre Company - Summer Holiday

Director Andrew Hibbert

Musical Director Chris Keen

Choreographers Sarah Maylor and Rosie Southwick

The focus in this show is not on the depth of the plot but rather the singing, dancing and insurmountable levels of energy produced by the cast, and Southey's production certainly had this. Congratulations to Andrew Hibbert on his first production for Southey – there were some nice touches. The eight travellers were excellent and certainly looked as though they enjoyed working together. The Back Stage crew did a grand job and initially must have had a hard task to get the "flat-packed" bus up four flights of stairs before building it on stage. Well done everyone!

Sheffield Teachers' OS - Hello Dolly

Director/Choreographer John Cumberlidge

Musical Director Anna Wright

This was one of the very few times in my 8 years as Regional Representative when I have been totally lost for words (whether good or mediocre) about a production. It certainly had that John Cumberlidge "magic" from principal's characterisation to ensemble setting, particularly the dancers. The costumes and wigs were first class – it proves that a show can still be spectacular with minimum number of costumes provided they are chosen with each person in mind and then worn with aplomb, the correct accessories etc. The scenery worked very well and what a difference it makes having a floor put down over the stage boards. The orchestra, sometimes a little too loud when there was spoken word, was excellent.

Manor OS - Cinderella

Director Richard Bradford

Assistant Director/Choreographer Linda Kelly

Musical Director Andy Collis

Assisted by Karen Cook

Once again, the production had all the ingredients of a “magical” pantomime – good choice of music, wonderful costumes, simple but effective scenery, horses for the “Hunting Scene”, and the Finale of Act 1 with a Crystal Coach drawn by a white pony to take Cinderella to the Ball. Congratulations to all the principals, particularly the youngsters taking principal parts for the first time – I’m sure over the 14 performances in 8 days, their confidence improved tremendously. The Society performed to approximately 14,000 people, quite an achievement in these days when “bums on seats” always seems to be an issue. To the Production Team – keep up the good work!!!