

Brighouse Theatre Productions - Oklahoma

Director Ian Stead

MD Jon Wilby

At last Brighouse are back in their Hall after nearly two frustrating years of not knowing when, or if, their next production could go ahead. Last night they opened with some young, very capable principals – Laurey (Helen Wrigglesworth) and Curley (Martin Stead) who sang well and looked good together. Will Parker (Stephen John) and Ado Annie (Amy Roche) were perfect foils for each other. There was excellent support from the other principals, chorus and a sympathetic orchestra. I did feel at times though there was a lack of movement, especially in the duet 'People Will Say We're in Love'. The title number from the show 'Oklahoma' was slick, well delivered and well received. The stage was well lit throughout, with simple but effective scenery that looked good and worked well.

Heckmondwike Players - Confusions

By Alan Ayckbourn

Directors Jeremy Shoesmith and Arran Shoesmith

A very different evening from the Players this year – 5 Plays in One! It began with 'A Talk in the Park' – a monologue with 5 people and 4 park benches. Following that 'Mother Figure' - she treats everyone like small children, even her neighbours, after her Salesman husband is away all the time. Next one 'Drinking Companions' – which involves her husband drunk in a hotel bar trying to get 2 girls into bed. The 4th one 'Between Mouthfuls' is set in a restaurant with 2 couples at different tables with their marriages falling apart. Last of all 'Gosforth's Fete' – this was hilarious, with good comic performances from all. The 5 plays allowed a team of about 20 members to take part, everyone working hard to establish their characters and gave us a great evening's entertainment.

Halifax ATY - The Railway Children A Musical

Director Andrew Whitworth

MD Rachel Haley

Choreographer Andy Milthorpe

With 23 scenes this could have been a very bitty show but 'HATY' came up with the idea of projected scenery and it just flowed along beautifully. As always the children were drilled to perfection, from the youngest child to the main principals, therefore maintaining the high standard we have come to expect from this young talented society. There was some delightful singing from Bobbie (Rose Liddell) and the Mother (Fay Jagger) and excellent character portrayals from every cast member large and small. Good choreography, lovely costumes and a complimentary orchestra, well worth all the worry and hard work Andrew. What more could we ask for, my congratulations to all involved.

Halifax G&S - The Gondoliers

Director Richard Buxton

MD Richard Buxton

The Gondoliers is a firm favourite with both companies and audiences and an excellent orchestra complimented this one (under the baton of the Director) and therefore we heard every word that was sung. Marco (Steven Greenwood) gave us a delightful 'Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes', also Guiseppe (Leon Waksburg) with 'Rising Early in the Morning' both played their parts to perfection, along with their two brides they made a delightful foursome. There was humour and a lovely duet from the impeccably dressed Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Torro. All backed by good chorus singing, with two bright colourful sets hired from the West Yorkshire Savoyards Appreciation Soc. This was a well balanced and enjoyable show.

Halifax LOS - Oliver

Director Steve Taylor

MD Ian Sapiro

Choreographer Alexandra Scott

We entered the theatre to an open stage with a striking set which worked well as it allowed them to move quickly from one scene to another by just bringing on different props to set the next scene and just light that particular part of the stage. With 45 children on stage how could this fail (hope they were all as good off stage as on) – we all know how excited children can get. Oliver sang clearly and Dodger was a pleasure to watch. An exceptional performance from Fagin and Nancy, with good cameo roles from Bumble and Widow Corney. I enjoyed the lovely singing from the Street Sellers – I thought it was a good idea to double them all up. Well you certainly got 'bums on seats' with this one. Well done everyone.

Calder Valley Youth Theatre - West Side Story

Director Abigail Sharp

Asst Director Stephen Garrod

MD David Mitchell

Choreographer Debbie Barker

After a very rousing overture I thought we will never hear these children sing but how wrong I was and the singing from the 2 leads Tony (Dan Craig) and Maria (Georgia Loma-Thorpe) was superb. They gave assured performances, along with great support from Anita (Clara Collett) and other principals. This can be a very difficult and demanding show and Calder Valley rose to the challenge admirably, the youngsters in this youth theatre have come on wonderfully in the last few years and their shows are something to really look forward to. A simple set, with an efficient stage crew that whip things on and off, helped the performance to run smoothly. My warmest congratulations to all involved in the direction and production it was a captivating evening.

Cleckheaton and Spensborough AODS - The King and I

Director / Choreographer Judith Morris

MD Peter Drinkel

Ballet Routines Choreographed by Stuart Stage School

The very effective set was the most striking I have seen for 'The King and I' anywhere for a long time. There was excellent chemistry between the experienced Anna (Angela Buffham-Wheeler) and the King (James Creegan) both working hard to give outstanding portrayals. They had good backing from Lady Thiang and the young boys, all the other principals were generally well cast. I particularly liked the ballet, choreographed by Debra Haigh, it was a delight to watch, the interpretation of the story, along with the impressive colourful costumes, all added to make this a striking production. The orchestra was a little loud at times, and we did lose some dialogue on occasions, and I do think the show should have ended with the death bed scene. This did not distract from the sparkling production.

Mytholmroyd St Michael's Amateurs - Carousel

Director Adam Smith

Producer Brenda Birtwhistle

MD David Root

Choreographer Janet Fletcher

What a terrific line up of principals, every single one was outstanding in their own way. Billy Bigelow (Andrew Bailey) performed the best Soliloquy I have every heard. Mr Snow (Andrew Redfern) and Jigger Craigin (Robert Davison) both made the most of every moment on stage. The ladies too delivered good characterisations and love singing. I wish I could name each one but it would be impossible in the short space allowed. With a very small stage, and even smaller backstage facilities, they worked wonders in such a confined space. Lovely to see the team of little Snow children and the older ones perform well. Good backing from the chorus and lovely costumes from Excel once again. Congratulations.

St Matthews Theatrical Society – Frankenstein the Panto

Director/Producer Iain Bedson

M.D. Steve Burnby

Choreographer Anne Haynes/Niamh Harris

A pantomime that is certainly different, it sounds a little frightening but the children in the audience (and the adults) loved it Lots of excellent characters parts, Professor Crackpot had good diction and a German accent that never slipped. Miss Nellie the Headmistress and her naughty school girls, the principal boy and girl sang sweetly, and to scare them all we had Dracula and Granula. I really enjoyed the scene where Frankie was operated on and they turned him into Frankenstein, the audience were in stitches! The make up for Kodak the dog and Frankenstein was well done, with good scenery and costumes along with special effects. This was a panto with lots of little parts giving plenty of opportunity for the young cast to have a go. Lots of fun and a great night out.

Brighouse Theatre Productions - A Family Carol Concert

Clifton and Lightcliffe Brass Band Band

Chorusmaster Jill Lambert

M.D. David Crisp

Always a delight to visit Brighouse and their Christmas Carol Concert, this time we had two choirs, one from Brighouse Theatre Productions and one from Longroyde Junior School both under the choirmaster Jill Lambert. There were lots of popular Carols included in the programme this year all with audience participation. The children had two spots one in each half, I really enjoyed 'Do You Know How Christmas Trees are Grown' with adult choir asking the questions and the children's choir answering. There were solo items and a duet all linked together with the Brass Band, and a light hearted Christmas Medley from the senior choir. With Coffee and Mince Pies all included in the ticket what more could you ask for.