

Issue 89

March 2006



(Affiliated to the National Operatic & Dramatic Association)

THE GRAYSHOTT STAGERS'

Newsletter

Chairman's Note

It has been a while since the last newsletter, and much has happened in that time. *Me & My Girl* was presented to appreciative audiences, albeit rather small in number, in December, and was enjoyed, as far as I am aware, by all who took part.

The February one act play evenings were a great success, again, and I would like to thank everyone who formed part of the team that worked so very hard to make it so. Snow was falling as the Friday evening started, but fortunately it wasn't enough to prevent anyone from getting to the Village Hall. On the Saturday night, as is now customary, the annual rent for the land on which the shed stands was paid to a representative of the Parish Council.

Now, as Spring finally arrives, it is time to think about our Spring play. *The Day After the Fair* will be presented in the middle of May, and it is time to order your tickets. There is more information elsewhere in the newsletter.

At the Special General Meeting on Wednesday 8th March, the membership voted unanimously to change the calendar in accordance with the committee's recommendation. The dates for *Carousel* are therefore confirmed as 10th to 12th May 2007 in Grayshott, and 17th to 19th May 2007 in Haslemere. The second & third weeks of May will not necessarily be a firm slot as we may need to be flexible and fit in with other users of Haslemere Hall during the years when the Haslemere Festival takes place. As soon as dates for future years are known, they will be announced on the website and as soon as possible in a newsletter.

Postcard piece

Taking advantage of Ryanair's £1 ticket offer (plus taxes), Heather and I did the "Loire Valley 24". After a fairly early start, and a drive to Stansted, we arrived at Tours airport at around midday on the Saturday. We picked up our car, a Citroen C3, and set off to drive down the valley and see as many Chateaux as possible. I have to admit that I have forgotten just how many we did see, but I can tell you that it was a lot.

Returning to Tours, we found our hotel,

and having spent the day driving around, we decided to eat in. This proved to be an interesting experience as, first of all, there was a large party of German tourists who had a block booking, and it took the 'Maitre de' to find a table for us after the waiter had told us they were full, and secondly it transpired that the restaurant was closing the following day for a complete refurbishment, so many of the items on the menu turned out to be, as it were, not on the menu.

The following morning we set out in the opposite direction, up the valley, looking at the countryside and a few more Chateaux, and eventually ending up back at Tours 'International'. After being quizzed by security staff about some glass plates that we had bought, we were allowed to proceed, and took off at 12.30, 24½ hours after we arrived, and were home in Hindhead shortly after 4pm.

The Grayshott Stagers' Shop

An internet organisation to which I subscribe has given me the opportunity to set up a shop to sell various items printed with photographs, or logos, or, indeed, virtually anything. I have been experimenting, and can now announce that shirts, hats, aprons, bags, mugs, mouse mats, magnets, emblazoned with the Grayshott Stagers memorabilia of your choice are available.

In the shop you will see various items printed with the Grayshott Stagers' logo, photographs from shows, poster designs, etc.. It would be impossible to display all the permutations, so if you have a particular request, please let me know and I will see what I can do. There is a huge range of shirts available, together with a number of hats, and other stuff; even underwear can be provided for the adventurous!

The prices are not exactly cheap, however, as items are produced 'one-off', rather than us having to buy in bulk, they are really quite reasonable. Grayshott Stagers will receive £1.00 for each item purchased.

The shop can be accessed from the Grayshott Stagers' website.

Tony

The Day After The Fair

Our Spring production, *The Day After the Fair* is a play based on a short story by Thomas Hardy, called *On the Western Circuit*. It is set in England's West Country, during the late 19th century.

The playwright, Frank Harvey, has taken care to present his version in the same gentle and precise language in which the author wrote the original. As with many of Hardy's stories, this one tells a tale of passion and pain, with a little humour added here and there, a tale which eventually reaches an inevitable and somewhat unexpected climax.

I am delighted to be directing for the Stagers again and I am fortunate to have a strong cast, all of whom understand the power of well written dialogue and how to deliver it, thus making my job an easy and enjoyable one. The cast seems to be enjoying it too, which is good, because that's why we do it, isn't it ?.....

Rehearsals are well under way, so we're doing our bit - and it's up to all of you out there to sell as many tickets as possible, so that the fair folk of Grayshott (or anywhere else, we don't mind where they come from) can come to the Village Hall on 18th, 19th or 20th May and enjoy another evening of good entertainment from The Grayshott Stagers.

Tickets can be ordered in advance now from Thelma Robertson - ☎ 01428 605194. The booking office at the Grayshott Bookshop will be open from 5th May.

I shall look forward to seeing you all at the performances.

Shirley

The Day After The Fair Cast

Edith	Jennifer Charters
Letty	Angie Hilder
Anna	Lynne Mitchinson
Arthur	John Hilder
Sarah	Barbara Netherwood
Charles	John Dowsett

Dates for your Diary & Membership News

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed Lynne Mitchinson as a new member, she is in the cast of *The Day After the Fair*.

We send our heartiest congratulations to Rachel Charters on the announcement of her engagement.

If we have overlooked anybody or any event, apologies, please let us know.

Melanie

2006

7-8 April, Haslemere Hall

11-13 May, Haslemere Hall

18-20 May, Grayshott Village Hall

12-29 May, Haslemere

25-27 May, Haslemere Hall

13-17 June, Farnham Maltings

12 July, Grayshott Village Hall Common Room

22 July, Grayshott Village Hall

13 September, Grayshott Village Small Hall

20 September, Grayshott Village Hall Common Room

07 October, Grayshott Village Hall

24-28 October, Haslemere Hall

23-25 November, Grayshott Village Hall

29 November, Grayshott Village Hall Common Room

10 December, Haslemere Hall

2007

23-24 February, Grayshott Village Hall

10-12 May, Grayshott Village Hall

17-19 May, Haslemere Hall

Haslemere Thespians' One Act Festival

Haslemere Thespians' *Blithe Spirit*

The Day After The Fair

Haslemere Festival (www.HaslemereFestival.org.uk)

Haslemere Players' Festival Music Hall

FAOS' *Fiddler on the Roof*

Autumn Play Readthrough

Autumn Play Auditions

Annual General Meeting

February One Act Plays Readthrough

February One Act Plays Auditions

Haslemere Players' *The King and I*

Autumn Play

Carousel Presentation

Carousel Auditions

February One Act Plays

Carousel

Carousel



The History of Musicals - part 2

Continued...

Spotlight on Broadway

By the 1940s, during the Second World War, American dominance of the musical was emphasised by big guns such as Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. The sunny optimism of their *Oklahoma!* (1943) began a new era of big bright shows that were hits in the West End as well as on Broadway. More lyrical and vocally demanding than the shows of the 1920s, *Carousel* (1945), *South Pacific* (1949), *The King and I* (1951) and *The Sound of Music* (1959) soon became classics.

Other big names were Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner, who created the romantic *Brigadoon* (1947), the heart-warming *Paint Your Wagon* (1951) and the luscious *My Fair Lady* (1956), which was not only a Broadway smash but also became the most popular musical in the world. Similarly, the lyricism and humour of Frank Loesser's *Guys and Dolls* (1950) swept all before it.

The glory days of postwar musicals were also notable for Irving Berlin's charming *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), Leonard Bernstein's dramatic *West Side Story* (1957), John Kander and Fred Ebb's slinky *Cabaret* (1966) and Bob Fosse's strutting *Chicago* (1975). Audiences also raved about *Hello Dolly* (1975) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1976). Foot-tapping concept musicals reached their peak with Michael Bennett's *A Chorus Line* (1975).

With the arrival of the smartest kid on the block, Stephen Sondheim, the American musical hit the heights of sophistication with acid wit and satirical lyrics: from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) through *Company* (1970) and *A Little Night Music* (1973) to *Sweeney Todd* (1979) and *Passion* (1994), Sondheim dazzles with his cleverness.

Brits bite back

In the 1950s, the British scene was led by Sandy Wilson's *The Boy Friend* and Julian Slade's *Salad Days*, but these could never compete with the big, bold Americans. In 1960, Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* was a hit, but London had to wait until the 1970s before the power of Broadway was challenged by two British chaps, composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyricist Tim Rice.

They developed a new style of sung-through musical which mixed classical music with pop: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1968), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1972) and *Evita* (1978). Meanwhile, in the hippie footsteps of *Hair* (1968), the rock opera was born, and gave the world Stephen Schwartz's *Godspell* (1971) as well as *Grease* (1972).

Then, in the 1980s, Lloyd Webber went spectacular with the British mega-musical: the meowful *Cats* (1981), the roller-skating *Starlight Express* (1984) and the lavishly sentimental *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), whose crowd-stunning falling chandelier soon became legendary.

Even state-funded theatres were thirsty for musicals. In 1985, the Royal Shakespeare Company staged the explosive *Les Misérables*, by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, but the National Theatre's attempt at staging a new musical, *Jean Seberg* (1983), was a dreadful flop.

Future shocks

Despite premature obits for the musical, the past decade has been rich in hummable tunes. Jonathan Larson's *Rent* (1996) and Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty's *Ragtime* (1998) revived Broadway, while Disney's *The Lion King* (1997) pioneered the corporate musical.

The London-born *Mamma Mia!* (2001) used Abba pop songs to tell an emotionally strong story, and compilation musicals, such as *Buddy* (Buddy Holly's music) or *We Will Rock You* (the Queen musical), rule London's West End. At the same time, there's an increased vogue for stage versions of successful films, such as Mel Brooks' *The Producers*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *Mary Poppins*. In 2004, Lloyd Webber made a comeback with *The Woman in White*.

The musical remains a gutsy lady, and her show tunes will never die.