

FOBS

We would all prefer to begin a Newsletter on a positive note but it is inevitable that this cannot always be. This time we have to record the sad loss of Doreen Roose. Doreen had been a member of the Operatic Society until she moved away. On her return she suffered an illness affecting her mobility and preventing any stage activity. She became virtually housebound but still wishing to be involved with the Theatre she volunteered to take over the task of Membership Secretary in March 2001, giving sterling service until recently. We are grateful for her work under difficult circumstances and extend our sympathy to her family.

Our thoughts also go to our Chair, Heather Lloyd and her husband Michael. He is seriously ill in hospital and we can only hope his health improves.

Meanwhile we continued our Front of House activities giving various volunteers the opportunity to enjoy the new arrangements; sweet shop and box office separated and, of course, our 'state of the art' bar. I had thought it had everything, but one Sarah Mastin, a bar volunteer, suggested a wine cooler in which to stand opened bottles. Lo and behold, one has appeared, donated by an anonymous donor. It is made of copper and has four pockets for vertical bottles and a central tube in which to pour ice and water. These Chinese think of everything. Our thanks, whoever you are!

Shows fronted for included Kenley Holiday Workshop's 'Carousel', Aquarian Opera's 'Night of Opera Favourites' and in addition, a Barn Quiz Night at which members assisted.

Comencing with the Barn Sinfonietta on 24th October, there are no less than ten shows and functions rushing towards us ... and that's only before Christmas!

That's why we are always asking for more volunteers and so pleased when they come forward. I must say we have had a few very useful people join our highly skilled company lately. Keep coming!
DW

Quizzical Evening

The recent Quiz Supper evening was attended by 48 people, who were tested by questions on a wide range of topics. A magnificent supper was provided by Rowley Catering and throughout the evening beverages were served from the new bar by a highly over-qualified team of stewards. The whole event, conceived as a fun way to christen the new bar whilst raising a few more pounds for the fund, was enjoyed by all. Another quiz supper is planned for 24th January 2004. Tickets will be available from Mike Sutton on 01883 722088. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Oxted Operatic

Rehearsals are now well advanced for our November production which is GYPSY.

With book by Arthur Laurents, music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Gypsy has nothing to do with the Boys from the Blackstuff ("tarmac your drive, mister, cash in hand.....") but is actually set in the 1920's and tells the story of Rose, an overbearing stage mother, who is determined to break into the big time by pushing the vaudeville career of her younger daughter, June. However, unwilling to tolerate her mother's manipulations, June elopes with a dancer.....

Undaunted, Rose then turns all her attention on her older and less talented daughter, Louise, and eventually Rose's dreams come to fruition when she successfully transforms Louise into a famous burlesque stripper known as Gypsy Rose Lee.....yes, we have strippers at the Barn (all in perfect taste, of course)...

Featuring such wonderful songs as "Everything's Coming Up Roses", "Some People", "You Gotta Get A Gimmick" and "Together Wherever We Go" this promises to be a colourful and lively show under our team of Peter Reed (Director), Steve Rhind (Musical Director) and Denise Gilman (Choreographer).

Tickets are now available from Ibbett Mosely (01883 712241) and "Gypsy" runs from Tuesday 18th to Saturday 22nd November (all at 7.45 pm).

Now, to get you in the mood for Gypsy and the next Barn Quiz Night, can you remember: (1) Who starred in the original 1959 Broadway version of Gypsy, and (2) Who starred in the film version?

Gypsy will actually be the Society's third production of 2003 because after the highly successful, indeed award-winning, production of Cabaret in April we then staged something rather different in our July slot.. "Stepping Out" was always intended as a way for the Society to

help towards Barn 2000 and, to this end, was a great success resulting in a profit of some £2000.

Indeed that particular sum has now been paid over to Bruce Reed who has written to our secretary, Joan Constable, thanking us for this contribution. To quote from Bruce's letter: " I am writing to thank you and your members for their tremendous support of our Barn 2000 Appeal having received the cheque for £2,000 from John Harris as a result of the production of "Stepping Out". The committee and members of Oxted Operatic have been particularly supportive over the last two years as the scheme has progressed and the substantial monies you have donated have given the final stages a tremendous uplift and impetus....."

It seems highly unlikely that the Society will try to stage as many as three productions in 2004, particularly as this is to be a "Minack year". However, our two shows both promise to be absolute blockbusters, or should that be blockbuster.....?

In April we will be staging the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein show "South Pacific"; remember you can meet and greet the production team the week after Gypsy closes. In November 2004 our show is to be the equally-famous "Guys and Dolls". You simply cannot afford to miss either of these. Watch out for more even more details in due course.....

If you would like more information about Oxted Operatic, please feel free to contact our Secretary, Joan Constable (01883 717970) our Chairman, (David Clubb 01959 577754), our Treasurer, John Harris (01959 533326) or one of our committee: Sharon Dawes (01959 564068), Ernie Finch (01883 722268) or Glenn Gershkoff (07866 341893).

Now, did you know our "Gypsy" stars? The stage star was the one and only (thank goodness!) Ethel Merman. The 1963 big-screen version starred Rosalind Russell and Natalie Wood but there was also a made-for-TV version from 1993 featuring Bette Midler.....
GG