

FOBS

“That was the summer that was”.....So much for our air conditioning?! However, we have taken the opportunity to learn how to balance our super new air conditioning system to the best advantage of supporters in all parts of the Theatre – and 2009 has to be hotter?

Autumn is offering us a chance to admire the talents of local youngsters with visits from several stage and dance schools. A Led Zeppelin tribute band will cater for those of a ‘wilder’ nature and we’ll all enjoy the Christmas drinks on Sunday 7th December. This will be closely followed by “Christmas Cracker” on the 13th to put us in the right mood for the Festive Season. We do hope that as many FOBS as possible will come along to socialise as we appreciate and celebrate our lovely Theatre. The bar and sweet shop stocks are over flowing and it only remains to buy the mince pies and mull the wine!

FOBs, along with the rest of the Barn Community, mourn the loss of David Clubb, a very active and well loved supporter on both sides of the ‘footlights’ – he is and will continue to be greatly missed.

Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance 3

Three evenings of entertainment at the Barn back in the warm, summer days of July were enjoyed by our audiences. In collaboration with Melinda Cherrett, this youth variety showcase was put on to raise money for two local charities. Melinda chose InterAct as her charity and the Barn decided to support St. John Ambulance in recognition of their ongoing help by attending our shows as First Aiders. Through the hard work of all those involved and the support of our audiences a total of £7,000 was raised, split equally between the two charities. A presentation was made to John Kempton at the Sunday Club in November and we also welcomed other senior members from St. John Ambulance in Surrey . Thanks to all those who were involved in making this such a success, particularly Melinda and her Stagecoach team of tutors.

KHW Les Miserables School Edition

Filling in for a nearby NODA Rep, I was delighted to attend this production and even more delighted when I left. That is to say I was whole-heartedly impressed, the whole experience was extraordinary. The School Edition takes very little away from the version we know and these young people did themselves proud. For me, the acting was strongest. Some of these kids could teach the adults a thing or two about telling the story through a song – in particular Fantine’s ‘I Dreamed a Dream’.

When I arrived at The Barn Theatre I didn’t know what to expect as I knew nothing of the Company. I had been to The Barn once before and wondered how such a large-scale production and indeed my favourite musical could take place in such an intimate venue. I have to say, I needn’t have worried as I was blown away by the standard the Company was able to achieve.

I gather it all takes place over a ten-day period and whilst that doesn’t seem a long time, it gives the company a real chance to gel. Relationships between the principals seemed strong. Production and Direction seemed equally strong and the production team should be very proud of their achievements. There appeared to be no egos and everyone was pulling in the same direction which is the recipe for a good show. I have to keep remembering the age of these

Can You Do Your Biog by Next Rehearsal PLEASE!

There comes a moment in every rehearsal period that the actor dreads more than any other and that is when the production assistant says the dreaded words “Can we have the biography for the programme?”. Oh the horror, the horror.

There are four types of biogs. First – the factual, which lists ALL the parts you have played. Well, who wants to read that? Don’t your eyes glaze over when you read that kind of stuff? Mine do.

Second, the jokey, where the actor tries to hide their achievements beneath a light and self-deprecating quip, such as, “Mavis’s youthful looks belie her 60 successful years in Amateur Dramatics and she ascribes her ridiculous good fortune and myriad awards to a combination of good judgement, cosmetic surgery and axle grease.”

Third – the cloyingly sententious, the one that praises God a lot and ends: “I dedicate tonight’s performance to my beloved mother, whose tireless belief in me gave me the blessed confidence to sing, dance and show off.”

Fourth – the jolly but irrelevant. This is the type I go for and it’s just as cheesy as the rest. “Mavis lives with two naughty terriers, six cats and an incontinent Labrador pup. She is a passionate homemaker and her organic dahlia quiche won first prize in the village fete.” My fingers are down my throat now.

The dream biog I saw recently was Brian Conley’s entry at The Music Man at Chichester: “Brian Conley is very pleased to have survived in show business for 34 years. His hobbies include trying to park his car in Chichester.”

performers as I inevitably start to compare them to their adult peers from the West End. What struck me was the ability to act through a song. We have all heard these numbers sung in and out of context before but I haven’t noticed any previous production where a number of the principals have really concentrated on the words and telling their story.

Technically, the show was extremely sound. The Lighting and Sound Designers and Operators all appear to take their work very seriously and it showed. The staging was effective and made use of the available space. With representation of the sewers on each side, gobos to represent time and place and an efficient crew who brought on and took off tables and chairs as necessary. The costumes were excellent and very much of the period. Credit for this must go to the Wardrobe Team who obviously pride themselves on remarkable attention to detail. In places though, the cast were just too clean!

This was a true ensemble production but special praise must be given to the lead principals for very mature performances, there were some lovely cameos amongst the ensemble and indeed some lovely voices coming through to back up the lead principals. Younger members will have gained greatly from this experience, as you don’t get to perform *Les Miserables* every day.

Once again thank you for inviting me to The Barn Theatre and best wishes for your next year’s production. If your local NODA rep is able to make it, I shall be there as a paying punter!