

# PROMPT CORNER

## The newsletter of Sidmouth Arts Club Operatic Society May 2009

### Thoroughly Marvellous Millie

Wow! What a success! The audiences loved it!

Congratulations to all those who took part, helped backstage, helped front of house and in any other way for making this such a spectacular production. Our NODA South West Councillor, Gerry Branton, wrote:-

*"A little note to thank you for inviting me to see "Thoroughly Modern Millie" which Denis and I enjoyed immensely on Thursday evening. We did not stop talking about the performance on the way home and both agreed it was one of the best productions of TMM we had seen. Bravo SACOS!*

*I know I criticised the over enthusiasm of one section of your Orchestra, but really, apart from that, they produced the brassy Broadway sound, so right for the type of show, yet gave way easily to the more melodious numbers. A good sound system ensured that all principals were heard, apart from the occasional intrusive fortissimo previously mentioned. From the opening number, the Company burst onto the scene with movement and vitality and the pace never flagged. The innovative set, aided scene changes and Props must have had a field day, with those typewriters! However, they did produce the highlight of the performance for me, with the excellent "Speed Test" number, which was definitely the best example I have seen. An attractive wardrobe brought the 20's vividly to life, with exciting dance numbers and delightful singing completing the full excellent package.*

*Full marks on your casting, which was well nigh perfect, with an enchanting Millie, who sang and danced her way into our hearts; a debonair, romantic Jimmy to die for and a perfect foil for Millie; charming, dainty Dorothy and a master of comedic timing in one, Trevor Graydon. Well done! The supporting roles were no less impressive, with Mrs Meers' comic "slave-trading" aided by her two Chinese cohorts, producing some very funny excerpts; Miss "Peg" Flannery, who produced an exquisite elbow, along with her OTT character; and then there was Muzzy van Hossmere, a larger-than-life character, with the voice and personality to match! Congratulations to you all! The rest of the hugely supporting cast are also to be commended, for producing such interesting characters and little cameos within scenes, which carried our interest through to the very end.*

*I so enjoyed meeting many of your members afterwards and I do congratulate your Director Joan, MD John and Choreographer Vicky on a truly wonderful show, which appeared to give our audience great enjoyment as well as sending Denis and me home very happy!*

*With kind regards to all and best wishes for your next production."*

### The Bucket Collection

You will recall that the bucket collection was in aid of the Exeter Shillhay Community's Meaningful Occupation Project. Our Marc (late Ching Ho) is the project manager and we were delighted to be able to tell him that the collection amounted to £683. The committee will round that sum up to a good round figure (I can't tell you how much because we have not held the committee meeting yet) when a formal presentation will be made. It is great to know that in our enjoyment we can help those who need "a leg up".

### The Raffle

Members will be aware that we team up with the Lions Club of Sidmouth for the show raffle. The arrangement is that we provide the opportunity and half of the prizes, they sell the tickets and we share the profit. Our half share of the profit this time was £345.

### THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Just when you thought you had time for a rest and to catch up with all the things you didn't do during the past three months it's time to start rehearsing for Pirates.

Our first rehearsal is on **Wednesday May 6th** when director, Alec Fellows-Bennett, will explain how he intends to interpret the show and what he expects of the cast. I have no doubt that Musical Director Roger Howell will have a few comments to make too. There will then be two rehearsals on May 11th and 13th to prepare for the auditions which will take place on Monday May 18th. Then it's anchors aweigh.

We will almost certainly be moving into the theatre on Saturday October 3rd, have our dress rehearsal on Sunday October 4th and the show will take place from Monday October 5th to Saturday October 10th. Put those dates in your diary now so that there is no misunderstanding.

The show needs a good chorus of pirates and daughters to support the principals so do encourage anyone who might be interested in taking part to come along on Wednesday May 6th.

### .... and finally

In the early 19th century stagecraft was advancing. Flats were moved into place with ropes rigged from the rafters and by unseen scene-shifters. Sailors and former sailors, accustomed to working with ropes, made the best scenery men. Wrote one playgoer in 1817, "Covent Garden Theatre ...was shewn to us by Carpenter. He told us that...the expence of preparing a new Pantomime is something more than 7000 pounds and that to work the machinery of a Pantomime employs 170 persons, who act under the direction of one person who is called Captain." Exactly like a ship!