

MUSICAL NOTES

Number 12
June 2003

The Newsletter of Newtown Musical Theatre Company



A Message from your Director

Thank you to all of you who will be taking part in *The Mikado*. It is a show that should be great fun to do, with plenty for everyone to do. I performed as *Pooh Bah* in it many years ago at Warwick University and it has remained a favourite of mine ever since.

We will be staying fairly traditional and will be mainly using a set of costumes that Mid Wales Opera had made for *Madam Butterfly*, but hiring costumes for the main principals. In a change from past years, we will be staging a matinée on the Saturday, so we will be giving three performances in total.

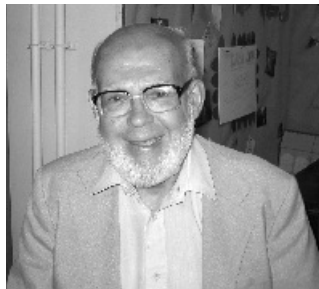
I would especially like to thank Norman for saving the day at the eleventh hour by agreeing to be our MD, also Ceinwen and Huw for volunteering to accompany us during our rehearsals. Also thanks to Marjorie, Christine, Karen and Derrick for helping us on the audition panel.

I do apologise for the delay in getting underway with rehearsals. This was due to the temporary lack of an MD - thank you to both Ian Shirley and Kat Bond for standing in at the early music rehearsals.

As most of you probably realise, this is my first attempt at directing and I appreciate everyone's patience as I "learn the ropes". I am also still looking for an Assistant Director - any volunteers would be greatly appreciated!

We are also now looking to put together a backstage team. We will be making our own set,

Welcome to Norman



NMTC is delighted to welcome Norman Spooner, from the Oswestry area, as Musical Director for The Mikado.

We are very pleased that Norman is joining us for the Autumn Show, especially as he has a long journey to rehearsals from over the border.

Norman has directed and musically-directed the Mikado many times before - you can read more about Norman overleaf.

Congratulations ...

... to Tracy and Ian Pawley on the safe arrival of Alexander James on 7th June 2003 weighing in at 9lb7oz. (And, of course, congratulations to Jim Evans on his third grandson!)

so will need (simple) set construction and decoration, props, stage hands and so on. Please let me know if you could help us.

Thank you for your support, and enjoy yourselves!

Jeremy

Me & My Girl

Earlier in the Spring, members of the company voted on the shortlist for Spring 2004 shows. From the choice of *Brigadoon*, *Guys & Dolls* and *Me & My Girl*, there was an overwhelming majority in favour of *Me & My Girl*.

Me & My Girl will be performed on March 24th to March 27th 2004 at Theatr Hafren.

The Committee are currently looking for a Production Team for *Me & My Girl* - anyone interested in being involved, please contact a committee member.

Kiss Me Kate Video

The video from *Kiss Me Kate* (taken on the Thursday evening performance) was shown on Friday 2nd May at Treowen School. Thank you to Jill Peters for arranging the venue and to Jackie Titley for helping with the interval refreshments.

I think everyone agreed that the video has come out really well, with good picture and sound quality, and an entertaining evening was had by all.

The videos are available to buy at the price of £13 from the Church Hall on any rehearsal night, or contact one of the Committee.

Tap Dancing Dinner

Members of the NMTC tap dancing class celebrated "end of term" with dinner at The Black Boy Hotel in Broad Street on April 9th. Fourteen tappers turned up to enjoy a hearty carvery meal with 14 types of vegetable ...!

Party Pieces III

Unfortunately the planned third episode of NMTC's "pay and perform" fund-raising-social evening scheduled for 16 May 2003 had to be cancelled because a lot of members had other prior engagements.

A new date will be announced when the Little Theatre is next available (which has to be between NADS shows).

New Chairperson Needed

Ian Hogg has announced that he will be stepping down both as Chairman, and for the Committee, in October 2003. He will be President of the Rotary Club for the next year, an office which will occupy a lot of his time.

NMTC will obviously be needing one - or more - volunteers to take on the huge amount of work Ian has been doing on behalf of the Society.

Please can everyone start thinking if they, or anyone they know, might be able to step into Ian's shoes in the autumn.

Diary 2003

June 2003	Rehearsals for <i>The Mikado</i> in progress
July 12	Trip to Aberdyfi
Sept tba	Weekend Rehearsal for <i>The Mikado</i>
Oct 3 - 4	<i>The Mikado</i>

Welcome

NMTC is delighted to welcome new members for *The Mikado*: **Elizabeth, Andrew and Christine**. We hope you enjoy being part of NMTC!

Also welcome back to all those who have missed a show or two - including *The Mikado* himself.

We are also particularly pleased to welcome two new rehearsal pianists - Huw Stephens and Ceinwen Richards. We are all very grateful that they are helping us with this essential part of putting on a show and hope they will enjoy working with us!

Social Events

Trip to Aberdyfi

A trip is planned for all members to Aberdyfi on 12 July 2003, including an evening meal.

For more information, please see Ian.

Trip to Annie in Aberystwyth

The community theatre company in Aberystwyth is performing *Annie* at the Aber Arts Centre in August. Please see Sylvia if you are interested in going.

NMTC Committee

Chair	Ian Hogg
Vice Chair	Jim Evans
Treasurer	Jeremy Thorp
Secretary	Jackie Tittley
Business Manager	Peggy Bound

Committee Members:-

Sylvia Davies	Vivica Flynn
Karen Scull	Mark Ward

Non-Committee Posts:-

Membership Secretary	Ruth Thorp
Librarian	Gwiryon Bond



Announcing the Cast

The auditions for principal roles in *The Mikado* took place at the Methodist Church Hall on consecutive Wednesday evenings, 13th and 20th May 2003.

A new five-member audition panel was used to ensure maximum fairness to all auditionees. Thank you to Christine Roberts, Marjorie Meredith, Derrick Rodgers and Karen McMurdo for assisting Director Jeremy Thorp with the difficult task of casting *The Mikado*.

The panel would firstly like to thank pianists Ceinwen Richards and Huw Stephens who stepped in at short notice to accompany the sung auditions.

The panel would like to thank all auditionees and to commend the high standard of performances. The cast is as follows (in order of appearance):

GoTo Paul Hester*

PishTush Richard Jones*

Nanki Poo Gareth McMurdo

Pooh Bah Ian Hogg

Ko-Ko Andrew Bond

Yum Yum Sarah Gardner

Peep Bo Emma Flynn

Pitti Sing Ruth Thorp

MiToo Gwiryon Bond**

An Mi Melanie Hill**

Katisha Kat Bond

The Mikado Michael Wakeman

* *The dialogue and songs for Pish Tush are to be split between Paul and Richard. This has often been done before, the second character being called GoTo.*

** *Two new parts have been created using spoken and sung lines from the other three little maids.*

Auditions - Spring Show

Auditions will be announced for the Spring 2004 show, *Me & My Girl*, as soon as the production team is confirmed. Watch this space!

Portrait of Our New MD

Norman Spooner comes from a non-musical family, but nonetheless "acquired" the ability to play the piano by ear at the age of 5. His first conducting experience was at primary school: joining a class mid-term, all the percussion instruments had been allocated - there was only a "stick" left.

Conventional music lessons followed when he learned the violin briefly, aged 10 to 13, when he learned to read music, a skilled transferred back to his piano-playing.

Norman spent most of World War Two in the Far East as a Japanese translator (code-breaking at the Far East equivalent of Bletchley Park) and was once referred to as "that RAF character who's thrashed the Grieg Concerto out of every canteen piano between Bletchley and Brisbane".

Graduating after the War in French from Manchester University, Norman also added a year's classes in Music "for fun". He then began to arrange and compose, directing the University Chorale Française. He also founded the G&S Society in 1952 and conducted it for about 14 years. He wrote the music for, and directed, a University-commissioned musical.

Going into language teaching, Norman spent his spare time involved in numerous G&S performances, sometimes as Director, sometimes as Musical Director and sometimes both.

Norman extended his musical activities into the big societies in South West Lancashire - Manchester, Salford, Stockport and Wigan - as well as many minor societies. With performances at the big Manchester venues of the Palace Theatre and the Opera House, he was privileged to participate in several "amateur firsts", doing the amateur premières of *Gigi*, *Calamity Jane*, *Sweet Charity* and others.

After 14 years as Head of a Modern Language Department in Manchester, Norman became Head of Music for 3 years before retirement. He reports "no lasting damage".

Norman left Manchester for Shropshire around 1984. He was Musical Director with Shrewsbury from 1987 to 1996. He is currently working with the TANAT Theatre, arranging for a Harp Duo.

He has almost given up on his intention to write a musical - there's no time!