

MUSICAL NOTES

Number 27
April 2010

The Newsletter of Newtown Musical Theatre Company

Chairman's Report

Well done and thank you to everyone involved in *High Society*, on stage, back stage, costumes props etc etc. Your commitment was 100%, all determined to do those dances. Lots of very positive comments from several sources. Inevitably we can't please everyone completely but most of the comments were complimentary, and so they should be. Newtown Musical Theatre Company is held in high esteem by people far and wide.

I feel I have to just mention Bridget and the whole of the Scull family. Despite their traumas just prior to the show they all came up trumps.

A couple of words, however: the NODA rep noticed the over-exuberance of some of the cast during the Saturday evening show. It is surprising just what our audience *do* notice, so a lesson there to all of us in stage etiquette!

Also a word about the changing rooms on the Sunday morning. As you can imagine everyone in the show is tired by then and to have to clear up unnecessary 'clutter' for want of a better word doesn't go down well - enough said.

Wasn't it great to share in Mike's presentation for his performance as Fagin in *Oliver!*? Andrew has put an article in the papers about it and you can read more about it overleaf.

Jackie Titley

CHAIRMAN

From the Editor

Many apologies for the long gap since the last newsletter. As much as anything, I have to wait until I get enough material to go in the newsletter - and if this doesn't arrive before I get caught up in producing the programme for the show, then it tends to have to wait till after the show.

As always, please remember that this is your newsletter and I'm always happy to have contributions from any of our members and supporters.

Ruth



Our next show is *The Musical Lorna Doone*, which is written by our very own Kat Bond - and by "written", we mean book, music and lyrics. It is therefore a brand new work, so we will be performing a world première! We hope that everyone will enjoy being involved in such an exciting project.

Directing Team

Jill Peters has been appointed as Director of the show with Les Skilton as Director's Assistant.

Diary

Please take a look at the diary overleaf to see when read- and sing-throughs are taking place, as well as the auditions and the first rehearsals.

There is also an opportunity to see a BBC version (drama, not musical) of *Lorna Doone* at Treowen School on Wednesday 14th April 2010, so we can get an idea of the story and the characters.

More about the Show

You can read Kat's own thoughts and ideas about *Lorna Doone* overleaf, plus a brief synopsis of the story.

From the Chairman

Just to remind everyone that I will not be standing for the position of Chairman at our AGM in the Autumn, although I am delighted to be chairman for the next show, our world première of *Lorna Doone*.

Jackie

LORNA DOONE

not all Doone and Gloom!

WARNING - *if you're looking for a good depressing wallow ... this certainly isn't the show for you!*

I have based *The Musical Lorna Doone* on RD Blackmore's well-loved classic of 1865. Set on 17th Century Exmoor, the story is more akin to 18th Century tales of swashbuckling and pirates than to other 19th Century gothic novels. The characters are "well-rounded", showing different aspects of their natures.

I have moved through different styles of music in "LD", but four main elements stand out:

- ? traditional English folk (*mainly used for the farming community*)
- ? Scottish folk (*for the Doones*)
- ? rock (*for the Doone gang*)
- ? and 17th Century early music (*for Londoners*)

These elements mingle and mix with a more familiar "musicals" style of music to make a blend that makes sense of the setting and characters - I hope!

The intention is to perform *Lorna Doone* with a small ensemble: piano/harpsichord (keyboard), percussion, oboe, bass guitar and (hopefully) violin.

Costumes will be simple, giving a strong feel of the period (Charles II) without being strictly accurate.

Doones will wear black - leather where possible (ooh!). Farming community will wear rustic rough non-patterned fabrics (browns, rusts, greens etc) and London and aristos will be more flamboyant (bright colours, satins etc).

The army "uniform" will be (as it really was) a simple yellow or red wide shoulder sash over rustic costumes. Where possible, men need long boots (any bikers out there?!) and/or buckled

tongued (heeled) shoes.

Scenery will be done with a mix of back projections (symbolic as well as more realistic scenery) and minimalist changing simple constructed blocks of some sort, together with a few items of furniture.

Throughout the whole show, John Ridd will appear both as older narrator "writing" the book, and as his younger self. Lorna, also, will appear first as a young girl, then as a young woman.

And the story? Young boy meets young girl. Older boy meets older girl seven years later. Boys loves girl but girl is a Doone (and Doones killed boy's father). Boy rescues girl from Doones only to have her taken into Chancery in London. Boy and girl finally get together and marry. Girl gets shot at altar. Boy pines away, but girl has survived after all => Happy Ending.

The baddies are bad.

The goodies are good, but not all the time!

And the moral is: if love is true, it's worth fighting for - no one can overcome true love! "Aaah!"

Harmony? Yes.

Chorus? Yes.

Principals and solos? *Loads (and parts can double up).*

Dancing? *Not a lot.*

Drama? *High!*

Romance? *Oh yes - but not too sugary.*

I'm very much looking forward to working with Jilly again, and with "new boy" Les - fun ahead folks!

And remember: watch out ... there's a Doone about!

Kat Bond

"Less Miserable than Les Miserables!"

NODA National Weekend

The NODA national conference (and general knees-up) is in Torquay this year. Several members have expressed an interest in attending - the more the merrier!

It is being held from 23rd to 25th September 2010 at a cost of £220.

Further details are available from www.noda.org.uk or from Jackie or Ian.

Diary 2010

DATES FOR THE MUSICAL LORNA DOONE

Wed 14th April	Video showing of the original RD Blackmore version of Lorna Doone so that people can get a feel for the story
Fri 16th April	Read- and sing-through of <i>The Musical Lorna Doone</i> by Kat Bond
Wed 21st April	Music rehearsal for all at the Chapel
Fri 23rd April	All invited to sing through the principals' music at the Chapel
Wed 28th April	Music rehearsal for all at the Chapel
Fri 30th April	All invited to sing through the principals' music at the Chapel
Wed 5th May	Auditions at Treowen School
Sun 9th May	Auditions (afternoon) at Treowen School
Wed 12th May	Music rehearsal for all at the Chapel

Exact dates and times for the auditions to be confirmed.

Fagin's Triumph

As you know, in spring 2009 we staged a hugely successful production of Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* and the show broke all box office records not only for the company, but also for Theatr Hafren itself. However, this show has just scored another triumph for NMTC and one of its members in particular.



On 27th March 2010, after the Saturday matinée performance of this year's spring show *High Society*, the cast and crew were asked to gather on the stage. This was not simply to meet our friends from NODA, as happens at some point during most of our shows, but it was for a surprise announcement of an award.

The NODA representative for the area, Lyn Emmerson, presented a trophy to Mike Clarke for his portrayal of Fagin during our production of *Oliver!*

The trophy was a Wales and Northern Ireland Regional award called the Lillian Harris Award. This is given annually by NODA to a company,

actor, production or team of their choice – a kind of amateur Oscar!

This is a great honour both for Mike and for NMTC, which Mike and his wife Chris have been members of since 1993 when they played Jud Fry and Ado Annie in that year's production of *Oklahoma!*

Lyn Emmerson said, "we really look forward to our visits to NMTC, and we always thoroughly enjoy each production. The standard is always very high here. You do well to have so many younger members – you really seem to enjoy yourselves and audiences like that!"



Chairman Jackie Tittley was delighted to point out that NMTC has kept its 'Olivers' and most of Fagin's gang from last year's show.

Holding up his award Mike said, "I must thank my Gang - they helped with this" - a loud cheer followed this remark from all the remaining Gang members who were on stage in the latest NMTC show.

Thursday Club Concert

Around thirty NMTC members gathered on a Thursday afternoon to perform a concert of songs - mostly from the shows, but others too - for the members of the Thursday Club.

The concert, which was held at the Methodist Chapel on October 29th 2009, consisted of 22 numbers ranging from full chorus through quartets and duets to solos.

The company sang some of its recent chorus numbers including 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' and 'True Love' from *High Society*, 'Ten Minutes Ago' from last autumn's show *Cinderella* and 'Unexpected Song', the Lloyd Webber song we sang in September for Sarah and Jonathan's wedding. The company also joined in the 'ooohs' and the last verse for Erryl's performance of 'The Rose'.

There were two quartets: Julie and the girls sang 'Lovely Night' from *Cinderella* (complete with actions!) and Bev, Kat, Ian and Andrew sang a four part arrangement of 'One Hand, One Heart' from *West Side Story*, accompanied by Jackie on the piano.

Several people sang solos for the first time, including all three of the junior members who took part in the concert. Keri Hopwood sang 'Music of the Night' (*Phantom of the Opera*), Jodie Breakwell sang the song 'Draig Goch' unaccompanied in Welsh and Aimee Breakwell - our youngest performer, just before her 11th birthday - sang the 'Vicar of Dibley' version of 'The Lord is My Shepherd'.

Thank you to Kat for rehearsing us and for accompanying most of the songs - not a minor feat so soon after her broken wrist.

This is YOUR newsletter!
Please give any contributions of ideas, articles and photos to Ruth.

A Note from Ian

I joined the company nearly 24 years ago, and in that time I have spent almost 22 years as either Treasurer, Secretary or Chairman.

I think it time that I have more time to do things on the 'long list' whilst I can. So, I hereby give notice that I will not be seeking to be a member, in any capacity, of the General Management Committee at the next AGM in October 2010.

Ian Hogg

Cast and Crew for *High Society*

Although *High Society* is now over, we have not officially announced the cast and crew in Musical Notes, so here it is ...

Directing Team

Directors Marjorie Meredith
. Jill Peters
. Jackie Titley
Musical Director Kat Bond
Production Manager Pat Scull

Cast in order of appearance:

Tracy Samantha Lord Siân Esslemont
Dinah Lord Jodie Breakwell
. Katy Collins
Margaret Lord Vivica Flynn
Dexter Gareth McMurdo
Uncle Willie Phil Evans
Seth Lord Dylan Francis
Liz Imbrie Bev Southall
Mike Connor Andrew Bond
George Kittredge Jonathan Davies

New Year's Party

Thank you to Jackie and Ian for again playing hosts for a New Year's Day party at their home in Tregynon.

There was a wonderful 'bring and share' spread of food and drink and plenty of fun, games and music, including some singing (of course). How the sofa survived the experience, though, is another matter ...



The NTMC Christmas Party was held at the Herbert Arms in Chirbury. We had a fun night which ended with a great sing song. The meal was slow in coming and was not the usual Christmas fayre - which surprised a few members - but it was of excellent quality and all freshly prepared.

NODA Crit of *High Society*

This show was a new experience for me as it was the first time I had seen the stage show.

All the problems of a society wedding come to the fore as morning dawns on the day prior to the wedding. Socialite Tracy Samantha Lord is marrying ambitious George Kittredge. Siân Esslemont carried off the role of Tracy, fully justifying her casting and giving an excellent portrayal of the spoilt bride to be. Singing was spot on and Sian took full advantage of the champagne situation the night before the wedding.

Gareth McMurdo was more than 'at home' in the role of Tracy's former husband C K Dexter Haven. Gareth was a natural in this role and his confident manner in script and score was just perfect, 'Just One of Those Things' and of course the lovely duet with Tracy, 'True Love' being very well received.

Fine performances from the versatile Andrew Bond as Reporter Mike Connor and Bev Southall as Liz Imbrie. As well as their well known 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire', both solo numbers 'You're Sensational' and 'He's a Right Guy' hit the right note.

Vivica Flynn portrayed Tracy's glamorous mother, Margaret Lord, with precision and Phil Evans just revelled in the role of alcoholic Uncle Willie.

The performance I saw had Tracy's young sister Dinah ably played by Katy Collins, sharing this role with Jodie Breakwell, both youngsters fully demonstrating their talents.

Nice contribution from Dylan Francis as Seth Lord, Tracy's wayward father and suitor Jonathan Davies as George



Kittredge who loses Tracy in the final moments.

Costumes were very much of the period and I must complement stage staff on their swift and silent scene changes.

Chorus numbers were well presented but I thought the stage became rather crowded

with twenty six maids and servants together with Lord's Household Staff, I could have done with a few of them myself!

Thank you all once again for your most generous hospitality and I look forward to your world premiere of *The Musical Lorna Doone* in October 2010.

by Lyn Emmerson, NODA

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
COLE PORTER

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Welcome to New Members

We are pleased to welcome to the following new members who took part in *High Society*. We hope you all enjoyed the experience!

Aimee Breakwell
Gerald Jones
Lucinda Price
Megan Thomas
Richard Hughes
Rob Jones
Zuzanna Wieczorek

Carol Singing

On Saturday 12th December 2009 a group of our members again sang carols around the Rotary's Christmas tree in Bear Lanes shopping centre in Newtown.

We sung a selection of traditional and less well-known carols and popular Christmas songs.

Thank you to Kat for rehearsing us, accompanying us and providing the music and to Hugh for providing an electric piano at very short notice when the expected piano did not turn up!

Website:

www.newtownmtc.co.uk

NMTC Committee

Chair	Jackie Titley
Vice Chair	Frances Western
Secretary	Erryl Cruse
Treasurer	Ian Hogg
Business Manager	Peggy Bound
Publicity Manager	Andrew Bond

Committee Members:-

Jonathan Davies
Les Skilton
Bev Southall

Non-Committee Posts:-

Librarian	Jill Peters
Archivist	Chris Clarke
Newsletter Editor	Ruth Hendry
Website Editors	Gareth McMurdo Jonathan Davies

(assisted by Sarah Astley-Davies)

Child Protection Officer Les Skilton

MEMBERS' NEWS

Sarah and Jonathan's Wedding

NMTC were honoured to be asked to provide music for the wedding of two of our members, Sarah Astley and Jonathan Davies on Saturday 12th September 2009.



Around thirty of our members performed two songs during the signing of the register - "Unexpected Song" by Andrew Lloyd-Webber (from *Song and Dance*) and "If I Loved You" by Rodgers and Hammerstein (from *Carousel*). The first of these was arranged by the bride herself and the second by Ian Hogg.

The wedding was held on a beautifully sunny day at the newly-refurbished Crescent Church in Newtown.

Welcome to Ella

Many congratulations to Sarah and Roger Banks on the arrival of Ella-Louise at 10.55am on 7th October 2009 weighing 7lb 15oz.

Ella managed to sneak into the photoshoot for *High Society* - perhaps because her proud Daddy was taking all the photos?!

Please let us have photos and information for the next edition of members' News!

