



Society : Maidenhead Operatic Society  
Production: **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**  
Date : 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2008  
Venue : Desborough Suite, Maidenhead  
Report by : Barrie Theobald, Actg. NODA  
Representative, Area 14

Report

Thank you for inviting me to review this production, which I attended accompanied by Henry Hawes, the NODA Rep for Area 13. *Fiddler* needs no introduction to theatre-goers, the storyline offering little opportunity but to follow the well-trodden sequences dictated by the plot. Simon's tight direction on your cleverly constructed set introduced one or two innovations to maintain our interest.

**BOB SPOONER (Tevye)** gave a thoughtful interpretation of the role. His conversations with God were delivered directly to the audience rather than in the traditional way to 'heaven', and in this way I felt we were sharing in his dialogue rather than just listening to it.

**CATHY BROOKES (Golde)** brought out all the humour in the constant nagging of her husband and displayed all the necessary matriarchal control over her family in her excellent portrayal of this role.

Their delightful interpretation of *Do You Love Me* was one of the highlights of the show.

**CHARLOTTE ROBERTS (Tzeitel)** the eldest daughter, who persuaded her father to let her marry Motel, rather than Lazar Wolfe. A good performance of *Matchmaker* was followed up with her attentive portrayal of the role throughout the action - whether with her family, with Motel or in the scenes when she was on stage but not the focal point of the storyline at that time.

**ZOË HORTON (Hodel)** was excellent as the second daughter - her 'sparky' exchanges with Perchik in the early stages of their relationship contrasting well with the pathos brought to *Far From the Home I Love*.

**OLIVIA HUNT (Chava)** gave a very positive performance in this role that is often overshadowed by those of her two elder sisters, clearly portraying her feelings when torn between her traditions and her feeling for Fyedka.

**RAY HIGGS (Lazar Wolf)** can always be relied on to produce a completely believable characterisation and his portrayal of Lazar maintained his ability to get right into the role he is playing.

**JEAN JOHNSON (Yente)** gave an assured portrayal as the Matchmaker

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**LAURENCE COX (Motel)** competently captured the shy characteristics of this role. I did miss the stock tape measure round the neck, though!

**NATHAN ROBERTS (Perchik)** I always feel sorry for performers who land this role and the sickly sentimental number *Now I Have Everything*. Nathan brought a different approach to the number by crooning it, rather than singing it straight – and, for me, it worked!

**BRANDIS SAVIZON (Fyedka)** for me, Brandis' performance would have been further enhanced by a little more swagger to make the role stand out from the other Russians.

**PETER MERRILL (The Rabbi)** at almost 87 years of age, Peter fully deserved our appreciation of his absolutely entrancing portrayal, stealing virtually every scene in which he appeared. This was a cameo performance par excellence!

**MURIEL CARPENTER (Fiddler)** competently performed most of her music on the upper levels of the staging. At times Muriel found herself standing in this area lit when no music required.

The many other cameo roles in this show were well cast. As radio mics were used by most principals, I felt it was a shame that the lines sung by Fruma-Sarah in the Dream Sequence did not 'echo' her voice, adding to the atmospheric content of the scene. The role of the Constable often lacked the authority such a post would have held. Special congratulations are due to the performers of the Bottle Dance (having danced this number on many occasions in the past, I appreciated the concentration required to keep the bottles in place, guys!).

## **PRODUCTION**

The piece was played on an excellent static set that allowed the many different scenic locations to be portrayed with a minimum of interference to the continuity. An atmospheric lighting plot complimented many of these settings, although at times it was almost overpowered by over-enthusiastic use of the smoke machines!

**DAVID HAZELDINE** kept firm control of his orchestra and sympathetically accompanied all the vocal numbers. Whilst the principals received good support from other members of the company in most of the ensemble numbers, I did not find *Anatevka* to be the very moving number it usually is, although I was unable to put the blame for this on either the vocal performance or the stage direction!! Perhaps I've just hear it/sung it too many times!

**SIMON WOODBRIDGE** took full use of the excellent set provided by **ANDY ROSE** and his backstage crew to give us a very entertaining production (we even had smoke rising from the chimney of Tevye's house!) The ensemble numbers were well staged and I certainly didn't leave thinking I'd seen it all many times before.

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All the Front of House afforded their customary warm welcome, and we were particularly welcomed and entertained by Alf Bromley. An excellent programme had been compiled for this production that, in addition to the normal cast listing and profiles etc., gave a wealth of interesting background on the history of the period and of the relevant Jewish customs.

Thank you once again for inviting me to review this production. I am hoping (again!) to shortly relinquish representing Area 14, but do hope you will continue to advise me of your forthcoming shows, so that I can keep in touch with you all.

*Barrie*

Barrie Theobald  
NODA Rep, Area 14