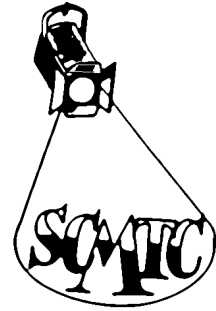
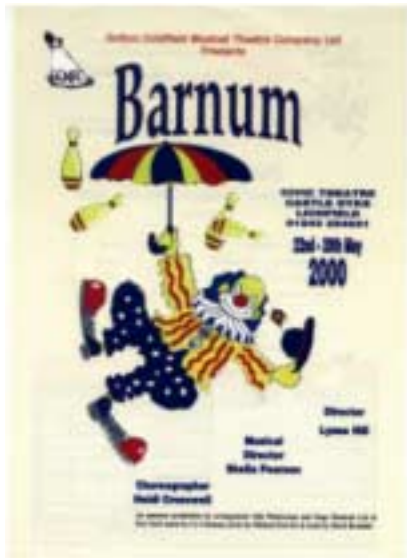


NOTES



Sutton Coldfield
Musical Theatre
Company
Limited

Chairman's Notes...



Well, how do you follow that?!!

For those who were privileged to see this magnificent production, I'm sure there's nothing more to say. This has to rank amongst the best shows we have ever produced, and I'd like to pass on everyone's thanks to everyone associated with it—Production Team, Performers, Stage Crew, Lighting, Sound, Costume, Make-up, Front of House, Board Members. Did I miss anyone?

We wanted a spectacular event for our Millennium Show, and that's what we got. Our audiences had an enthralling evening out.

The lead parts were excellent, and I hope everybody agrees that Craig playing Barnum was exceptional. Mind

you, he kept falling off the wire when I was in the theatre. It can't be that difficult having to sing, walk a tightrope, listen to a drumroll with 350 people watching you!!

Congratulations to the chorus, who acted their hearts out throughout the performance and made it all look so easy.

I'd like to single out Daniel Turner & Ben Adams. These are two of our youngsters who are growing into our stars for the future in front of our eyes. They both had real stage presence, and it's wonderful to see their talent growing. Well done to both of them.

I don't have final figures, but we believe that we've sold more tickets than any other previous show, and having budgeted on a loss, it's looking like we may come in ahead of our expectations. So again, thank you to all our members who sold tickets, particularly as we had a smaller cast than usual.

So now we move forward to our last performance in the Lichfield Civic before it is transformed into a modern theatre (see page 5).

We'll be performing Mack & Mabel (or M&M as I call it) in October. Let's hope it's a sweet production!!

Dave Bardell, Chairman

Volume 4, Issue 3
June 2000



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What the press said...

Theatre group walks tightrope and succeeds

RINGMASTER, clowns and jugglers welcomed the audience outside Lichfield Civic Hall, which was transformed into a Big Top for Sutton Coldfield Musical Theatre Company's spectacular, *Barnum*.

The foyer, too, was appropriately decorated. The cast had clearly spent much time developing their circus skills which gave zest to the show.

The musical follows happenings in the life of Phineas Taylor Barnum setting up attractions in 1830s America. First Joyce Heath, the oldest woman in the world: we are told she is 160 years old.

Barnum, however, admits that he puts 'high polish on the facts'.

Hip, hip, hooray for Craig Allen in the commanding role of Barnum, he is central to the whole show and on stage most of the time.

A brilliant performance, quite different from the last time he trod the boards of the Civic Hall as Wishee Washee in the Christmas pantomime. He took us through the life of Barnum with enthusiasm, he has a gift to make the audience involved and a very pleasing voice.

Above all, he astonished us with his tight rope walking, accomplished in full song.

This skill was mastered for the show — it brought the house down. He had a number of costume changes and looked the real showman in red and white at the finale.

Review by Tony Wood

Break a leg...

We've all heard the old thespian expression 'break a leg' before starting a performance. Unfortunately, nobody explained to Claire Stephens on her debut performance that you don't really have to do it!!

Poor Claire, having worked so hard in rehearsals, landed awkwardly on Opening Night and despite completing the performance, went to hospital the following morning to discover she'd fractured her foot. She spent the rest of the week with a leg full of plaster and crutches.

I'm pleased to report that she will not be out of action for too long, and will be fit again when rehearsals for M&M begin in June.

Now can someone explain to her that when we talk about 'tap dancing', it doesn't have anything to do with sticking your toe up a bathroom tap...

This Barnum had a 100% feel-good factor

A musical production in Lichfield last week was so impressive I just wanted to see it all over again.

Often publicity build-up for shows has more pazzazz than the show itself, but this was definitely not the case with Barnum.

Sutton Coldfield Musical Theatre Company pulled out all the musical, acting and clowning stops to present this astoundingly clever show, which, I believe, brought the house down every night.

The months of rehearsal learning circus skills certainly paid off and we were treated to a near-professional production which really did leave us wanting more.

Craig Allen in the lead role as P T Barnum proved, like his character, he's the inimitable showman. He excelled in this production which saw him singing, dancing, doing tricks and, last but not least, walking the high wire.

His performance on the Thursday I saw it was faultless. Perhaps the fact he was using Michael Crawford's shoes for the high wire brought him that added bit of luck!

But this certainly wasn't a one-man show. Debbie Gillbanks as Charity Barnum brought some great touches of dry humour to the role, although we couldn't hear on occasions.

Wendy Hawkins excelled as songbird Jenny Lind and Sally Baxter's blues singer in the Black and White sequence was raunchy and memorable.

The whole cast of this show put so much energy into their performance it left us, at times, gasping at their versatility. The One Brick at a Time sequence alone must have taken hours of practice.

Lynne Hill must be congratulated on her direction, along with musical director Sheila Pearson and choreographer Heidi Cresswell.

From the clowning around outside the theatre when the audience arrived to the Join the Circus finale, this show had it all.

Ann Mayo

M&M...



**Rehearsals commence
Friday, 16th June 2000
Britwell Hall, 7.30pm**

October will see us presenting our final show at the Lichfield Civic before it closes for major refurbishment.

This musical takes the audience on a nostalgic look at one of the earliest producers of two-reel comedies, Mack Sennett. Sennett reigned as the king of slapstick using his "counting" technique to direct his actors.

With Sennett as the narrator, the story takes us into his beginnings with the famous Bathing Beauties, the Keystone Kops and above all, his long-time romance with Mabel Normand, whom he made into a star. Sennett tells his story through flashbacks and the music of Jerry Herman.

The love affair between Mabel and Sennett went through changes, he afraid to commit, and she becoming more and more depressed and disillusioned. Eventually, Mabel leaves Mack for full-time movies, which bring her fame but lead her into personal tragedy.

Songs include "Look What Happened to Mabel", "This Time it's the Big Time", "I Won't Send Roses" and many more.

Wwwe're on the www...

We now have our own official website, for those of you with access to the Internet.

www.scmtc.co.uk

It's already got information on our History, Show Details, Contacts, Stars. And it's the first place to get your latest copy of NOTES in colour. You can even get hold of back-issues if you've nothing better to do on a Saturday Night.

You can also email the Board, so for instance, the Chairman can be reached by emailing

dbardell@scmtc.co.uk

Please forward any ideas for the website to the Chairman.

Happy Surfing!!

AGM—Friday, 14th July, 8.30pm, Britwell Hall...

The Board would like to invite as many members as possible to attend the AGM on Friday, 14th July, 8.30pm at Britwell Hall.

I am sorry to announce that Paul Lumsden has decided to stand down from the Board. He & Deb have recently bought a newsagents, and Paul needs more time to build up his business. Paul has made a major contribution to Promotions since joining the Board, and I'd like to thank him for all his effort.

This now creates an opportunity for a new Board Member. Already, Sam Green and Marion Whitbread have expressed an interest, and have attended Board Meetings to get a feel for what happens.

If anyone else is interested then please speak to the Chairman. Application forms will be issued one month before the AGM.

Timekeeping...

Could all members please note that rehearsals commence at 7.30pm SHARP.

This is an enormous irritant to our Musical Director, Sheila, and myself. Sheila's time is limited to one hour before the break in order to maximise time for Heidi and choreography. It really isn't fair to Sheila that people drift in over the first 20 minutes of her time, distracting those members who have had the courtesy to arrive on time.

So C'Mon Everybody, let's have a Good spell and make me a Most Happy Fella because I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire without the Guys and Dolls. This is How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying. That'll Be The Day, Annie.

Hairdresser...

At the moment, Denise Gilbert is unable to provide any support for hairdressing. I'd like to thank her for the years of effort she has put in, and hope that she will be able to come and support us again in the future.

We tried Obsessions in Lichfield and they didn't even respond to our letter, and other avenues seem to be drawing a blank.

Does anyone know of anyone in the trade who'd be willing to get involved, particularly during Show Week?

Please contact Meg Griffin if you can help.

100 Club—Latest Winners...

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Keith Davis | £25 |
| 2. Rachel Orlick | £15 |
| 3. Jenny Andrews | £10 |

100 Club New Season starts here.

£11 for the year, with a chance to win a monthly draw. All renewals & anyone new interested should contact:

Sally Baxter
0121 355 1237

Lichfield Civic Hall...

The existing Civic Hall is a solidly constructed building in which there is great potential to release as much space as possible. There is also land around the building which can be incorporated into the scheme.

By keeping all of the structural walls and concrete floor slabs, carefully removing the roof and stripping out all light weight finishes and services, we can create a new theatre and studio.

The scheme creates a new theatre and stage within the existing Civic Hall. A second flat floor studio is added to the south corner of the existing foyer block, both serviced from Frog Lane, the most convenient end of the site.

The main entrance, with level access, is repositioned at the lower ground floor level on the centre of a completely new elevation facing Wade Street. The existing toilets are fully re-furnished and the under-stage space, presently used for changing rooms, is opened up for box office and administration,

The new 490 seat theatre is constructed within the existing walls. This is split into stalls (ground floor access) rear stalls built off the existing stage (first floor access) and gallery accessed from a new second floor foyer.

The first eight rows of seats are on a flat floor; the next 5 rows also on the flat floor are tiered. The gallery seating being on a much steeper rake for sight lines. The seating is wrapped around the theatre at stalls and gallery level with loggia boxes on the side walls. There is an orchestra pit, which can be covered when not required,

The fixed seating arrangement is the principle ingredient of the recipe to turn the Civic Hall into a real performance space.

In the stalls, the seating and the front part of the stage are removable to provide a large flat floor venue.

A new stage house is constructed at the Frog Lane end of the existing hall. It creates a minimum 9.2 x 9m

acting area, with wings on both sides and a run through corridor behind. By slightly lifting the roof over the wings and on one or both sides it is possible to provide a scenery flying facility.

The studio, situated behind the stage, is a basic box 9 x 15m suitable for a variety of flat floor seating arrangements (150 seats) and also for art exhibitions, rehearsals and dances. There is a small gallery at first floor for control projection purposes, which can be extended at a later date.

The studio is accessed independently from Castle Dyke with its own foyer and toilets, so that it can be let as a separate part of the building. A new staircase links with the first floor. Level access is provided,

The existing foyer block at both levels is completely stripped out and made full value of. Castle Dyke elevation incorporates new toilets at foyer levels and

there are new connections into the Studio at both levels. The existing foyer staircase is removed, the roof comes off, and a new pitched roof makes the first floor a much more enjoyable space,

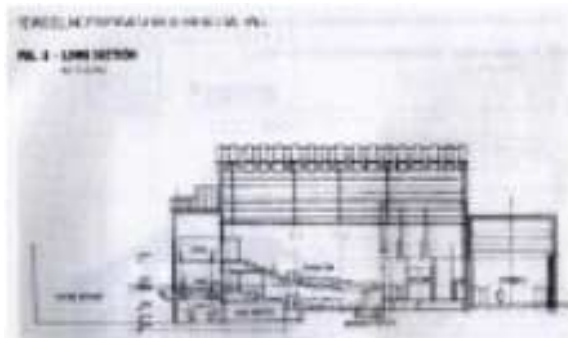
Lift access is maintained in the current position. The lift car is replaced with a new one suitable

for wheel chair access and it is extended to the second floor,

Attached to the building and concealed between the Civic Hall and the Shopping Centre, is inserted a lightweight building. At ground/stalls level are dressing, toilets and shower rooms. This space provides a lot of storage and allows for future expansion at the first floor.

- *Extracted from Remodelling Proposals for Lichfield Civic Hall, March 2000*

There seems to be a lot of politics surrounding this decision, so be aware that this is very much subject to change. If it goes ahead as planned, we can look forward to performing in a state-of-the art, modern theatre.



**Sutton Coldfield Musical
Theatre Company Limited**

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MUSICAL
—Theatre Co. Ltd—

The Board of Directors

Chairman: Dave Bardell
Vice-Chairman: Mark Symonds
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Member: Meg Griffin
Member: Diane Worland
Member: Maggie Jackson
Member: Paul Lumsden

Minutes Secretary: Julie Callaghan
Business Manager: Roger Dykes

STOP PRESS

Calendar of Events

SPONSORED SING (public)
Gracechurch Centre
10th June 2000, 10am—4pm

AGM (Members)
Britwell Hall
14th July 2000, 8.30pm

MACK AND MABEL (public)
Lichfield Civic
17th to 21st October 2000

CHRISTMAS CONCERT (public)
Sutton Coldfield Town Hall
10th December 2000

CHRISTMAS CABARET (private)
Whittington Golf Club
Tba

17th - 21st October, 2000
Ticket Prices

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Tuesday | £9 |
| Wednesday - Thursday | £10 |
| Friday - Saturday | £11 |
| Saturday Matinee | £8 |

Mack & Mabel

Booking Office Ticket Hotline

0121 682 3032

Between 9am & 9pm

Heather Adams
17 Welwyndale Road
Wylde Green
Sutton Coldfield
B72 1AW