



Players Patter No 187 - Feb 2019

www.HaslemerePlayers.com

Treasurers Report

Our ticket sales for CHES were 1178 which is slightly lower than we would have liked and disappointing given the high calibre of performances in what I thought was a really excellent production. Normally when we book shows the committee take into account the costs of putting it on. Royalties, scenery, costumes etc etc. The licence for CHES is rarely available and was limited to only a few companies who fitted particular criteria. It was only available for a very short window. As we were one of the companies that was eligible to stage this fantastic show we applied without being able to investigate all the costings in advance and unfortunately and rather surprisingly the royalties have turned out to be significantly higher for CHES than for a number of our other productions. I am still awaiting a number of advertisers to pay up for their programme adverts but suspect we will be about £1,000 out of pocket by the time I finalise the accounts for CHES.

It does seem like only yesterday that we were preparing for show week for CHES and now The Gondoliers is upon us. I hope you will all be buying tickets to support our spring production. Could I remind all of you who pay your subs by recurrent Paypal that the membership is now £30 so could you go into your accounts and change this from £25 please.

Arry

If you receive this newsletter by post and would be happy to receive it by email, please send an email to linda.haslemere@btinternet.com

Chairman's Message

As I write I am watching the early sun coming up from behind Blackdown on a cold and frosty morning. The days are noticeably getting longer and, despite the frosty mornings, the crocuses and snowdrops are making a tentative appearance in the garden.

The atmosphere amongst all the members involved in The Gondoliers is anything but cold and frosty. I have not been singing for long but I have received a lot of support and encouragement from my fellow tenors. This is a typical reflection of the warm atmosphere amongst everyone. It is lovely to have new members amongst us and I hope we will see them in future shows.

Andy and Mandy Boughton are working us hard and their vision is taking shape. Two weeks rehearsing on the stage brings everything into perspective, especially with the men now wearing their gondolier hats! Justin Luke's keen ear does not let us get away with anything. But it is an enjoyable process and we all look forward to rehearsals.

The selection of 2020 shows is now under way and we have two volunteers to direct for us in 2021. I am very excited that Alex Boughton has volunteered to work with a small sub-committee to help us research and choose future shows. Alex is Regional Programmer for the Ambassador Theatre Group and has been a member of the Haslemere Players for many years.

Please join me in welcoming Andy Johnston as a new committee member. He joined the society last year, appearing in Show Stoppers and Chess and he is also in The Gondoliers.

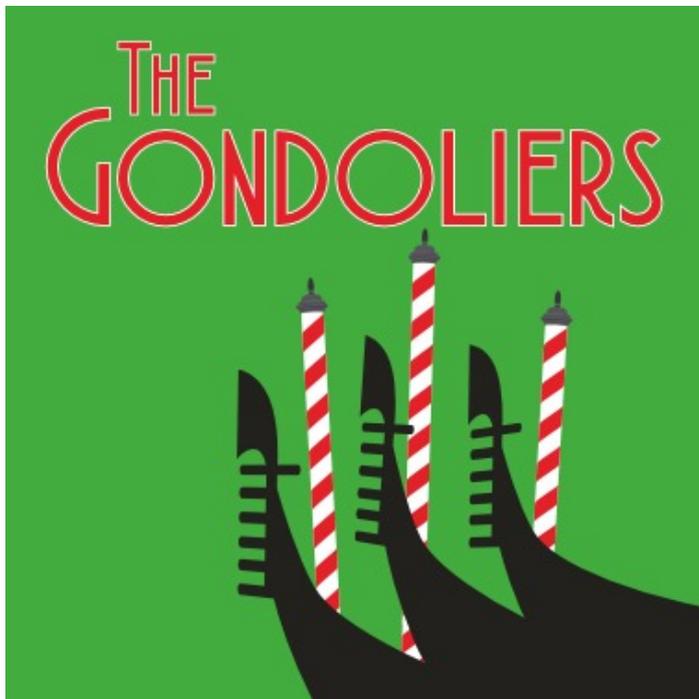
I am looking forward to working with both Alex and Andy.

Please do get in touch if, like Alex or Andy, you would like to be more involved with the Society in any way, we would love to hear from you. There are plenty of roles both on and off stage.

Before closing, a number of our members are currently suffering from ill health. I am sensitive about naming people, but we all send you our very best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Thank you for your continued support.

Chris



BOOK YOUR TICKETS FOR THE GONDOLIERS

Hopefully we are emerging from the winter blues of snow, ice, coughs and colds which serve to impact negatively on rehearsal schedules and the anticipated progress. As I write I am acutely aware that we are entering the final five weeks of rehearsal time and there seems to be a great deal still to cover. I am relying on the panic factor to kick in with everyone as a means to focus minds and accelerate us forward to be ready on curtain up.

As a production team we are fortunate to have an excellent cast; principals and chorus - plenty in numbers and enthusiasm and underpinned with considerable talent. Justin is working wonders with the four-part singing and Mandy is patiently sticking to her task of creating innovative dynamics. I spend my time coming up with the ideas and worrying about every other aspect of staging a show. However, we certainly have the essential ingredients for delivering an excellent production and I am confident this will be achieved.

Hamish has assembled his team to construct gondolas and roses (reminds me of a hard rock band), Jenny is gathering together costumes to suitably attire the cast of nearly 40, and an array of properties, not usually associated with G&S productions, is well on the way to being acquired.

This is a must-see show, not quite the usual menu for G&S, but a production which promises to be rich mixture of excellent music, performances and visual interest.

Andy

Show Stoppers

You're invited to be a part of our next production, Show Stoppers: An Evening of Love!

It's a bouquet of modern and nostalgic music delivered by our talented MD, Justin Luke. We're taking an authentic approach on intimate relationships—naturally including romance and vulnerability—as well as spots of comedy in every corner. We mustn't take ourselves too seriously!

Richard Weller, our witty compère for the 'evening', will take us through the natural stages of a relationship: the honeymoons stage, the disillusionment stage, and then mature love. Each stage has it's ups and downs, and nothing better to experience them but through hilarious skits and well-known musical songs.

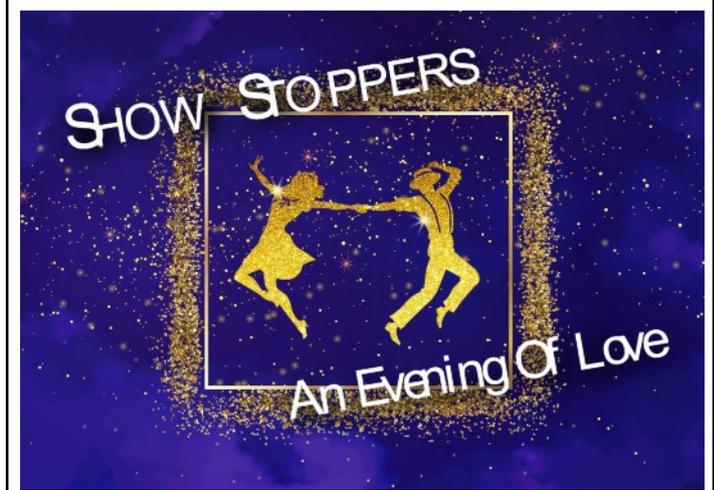
I've worked hard to design a show that is relatable, fun, but yes, also with depth and meaning.

Whether you're interested in singing, being part of the chorus, or acting in a skit, please come and learn more at the **presentation evening on Tuesday, 2nd April, 7:30pm at the Grove**. At the presentation evening you will fill out a form with your availability and you can tick off the songs you'd like to be considered for and write in how many you'd like to be in. During the tea break, each singer will join Justin and me at the piano for singing practice (scales). Immediately after, we will sing as a chorus the final number, Seasons of Love. I will then email a cast list and rehearsal schedule, hopefully the next day, Wednesday. Please have your availability for April & May with you at the presentation evening. Although this is a children-friendly show, we are only able to include over 16s.

Here are a few songs we have included: *I Need A Hero* (Shrek 2), *People Will Say We're In Love* (Oklahoma), *Your Song* (Moulin Rouge), *Don't Rain On My Parade* (Funny Girl), *Agony* (Into The Woods) Other musicals are: La La Land, Hamilton, Phantom of the Opera, The Greatest Showman, Evita and more.

Remember, Show Stoppers offers a flexible rehearsal schedule, allowing you to be in a few numbers or even just one. We'd love for you to join us – come one, come all!

Lucy Loveland



Players Spring Ceilidh

7.15pm on Saturday
the 27th April 2019 at
Grayshott Village Hall

A really fun evening which includes a delicious Supper of Sausages, Beans and Tatties with Apple Pie and Cream for dessert (vegetarian option available).



Live Music and Scottish Reel Dancing provided by our professional caller.

BYO Wine/Refreshments. Dress - optional Tartan theme.

Tickets £ 15.00 per person with limited availability which can be purchased in advance via PayPal at www.haslemereplayers.com

HASLEMERE PLAYERS & THE GONDOLIERS OVER THE YEARS

The forthcoming presentation of *The Gondoliers* marks the seventh time in the company's long history that the show has been shown. After the Players' formal inauguration in 1905, it was the second production to be staged.

For *The Gondoliers*' next appearance in 1922, the critic commented: "Nothing so great in a scenic way has ever been attempted on our stage and the success was complete". (In those days and up to around the 1990s, the Herald always sent professional reviewers to all our shows). There was one problem though - it appears that during one of the performances when the silver pathway to Baratavia made by the Venice moon upon the Grand Canal rippled rather realistically, the conductor's wife in the front row sent a message up to the stage manager. "Tell Rex Chandler that I think the scenery must be on fire". Apparently it was but, maddeningly, there are no further details of how it was put out or its effect upon the cast!

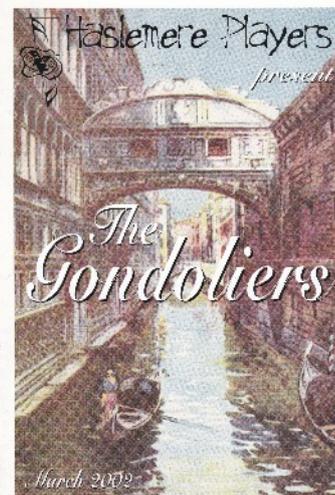
Several of the stars though might have been a trifle upset at personal comments in the newspaper at the time. For Joan Oldaker, making her debut in opera as Tessa, there was "just one friendly caution" as the reviewer went on: "gestures can be overdone even with beautiful arms and hands". Mr Whishaw as Luiz reportedly "did his best" and, as that was his one and only appearance with the company, one might imagine he was not exactly encouraged! Nor too would be Miss Whitfield and Miss Craddock playing Fiametta and Vittoria whose voices, it was said, "reminded one of those of the willow wren - very sweet and very small. You want to be very near to it to hear what it is saying"!

In addition to the full houses for the four performances of 'The Gondoliers' there was an invited audience for the dress rehearsal. It seems that Guides and Scouts had free seats in the body of the hall while the balcony held 135 people who had paid one shilling each to attend.

In the 1930 production again some points did not find favour with the Herald critic who complained of "some incomprehensible lapses of memory". He continued: "I distinctly heard three different voices trying to prompt one of the male principals". And once more he was less than kind to two of the lady soloists. Of Joan Oldaker (again!), playing Tessa, he wrote: "I could wish she would avoid an occasional habit of turning in her toes when singing. Stance is important and I feel that Miss Oldaker was not intentionally giving us an imitation of Happy Fanny Fields. That is why I mention it - with profuse apologies"! Her fellow contadine, Gianetta, fared little better for the critic declared: "I am not fond of Miss Usherwood's voice except on the high notes when it is beautifully clear. At other times there is a little too much vibrato for my taste". (It seems these earlier principals must have been made of stern stuff to withstand such personal criticisms - one wonders how today's 'stars' would cope with such remarks!)

In 1953 "polish and sparkle" were words used to describe the sell-out production of 'The Gondoliers'. A leading light of the time told of the high jinks that went on in the male dressing room. Apparently they were playing sardines during an interval and the tenors had hidden in the big basket crates used to transport the costumes, in those days hired from Charles Fox of London. This was before the Tannoy system had been installed at the Hall and the cast had to rely on personal calls. It seems that when the curtain went up for Act II the basses found they were on stage on their own with no tenors! Needless to say the miscreants got a real rocket for such unprofessional behaviour.

In 1960, 'The Gondoliers', proved so popular that the Haslemere Hall manager, Ted Alcock, reported that only four balcony seats remained for the Saturday night before the box office opened. It is recalled how the ducal party made their entrance in a wheeled gondola which was rolled on to the stage behind a rostrum. It was meant to come to a halt in the centre for the characters to



2002 Programme Cover

alight but, as it was reported, "some bright spark had put a batten down and the gondola stopped dead - but they didn't!" Apparently everyone collapsed in a heap and the Duchess in particular was not amused!

The production in 1984 introduced a young Andy Boughton who played Guiseppi. The production in 2002 featured Hamish as Don Alhambra, Vicky Gavin as Cassilda and Edward Tobin as Francesco. Doreen Wylde was MD for both of them.

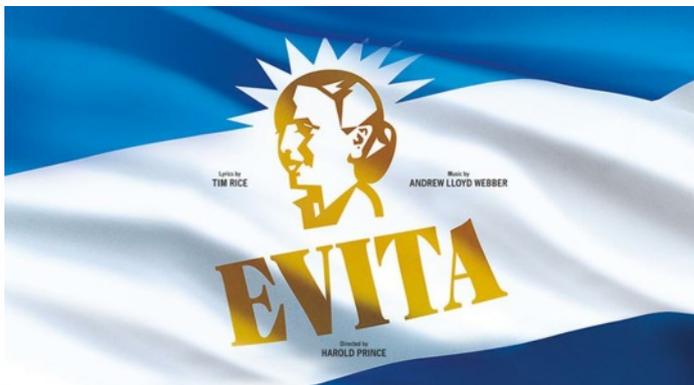
These notes are taken from my book, *The Flowers that Bloomed in the Spring*, issued in 2000 and celebrating a century of musical theatre in Haslemere. *Fay Foster*

EVITA October 22nd to 26th

April Auditions and Presentation Evening

We are thrilled to be bringing the iconic Evita to Haslemere in October this year. With one of Andrew Lloyd Webber's greatest scores, combining Latin, Jazz and Pop influences to evoke the spirit of Argentina, Evita is one of the most popular musicals of all time, with songs including *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*, *Oh What a Circus*, *Buenos Aires*, *You Must Love Me* and *Another Suitcase in Another Hall*.

As well as having great principal roles, Evita is a fantastic show for chorus, with plenty of chorus songs, lots of dancing, and also several smaller roles. The chorus represent the people of Argentina: the workers, the army, the aristocracy, all of whom played a central role in the true story of Evita.



As some of the principal roles are substantial we have decided to hold the auditions for the roles of Eva Peron, Che Guevara and Colonel Peron earlier than usual to allow more time to learn and prepare the parts.

Please make a note of the following key dates:

Presentation Evening:

Tuesday 16th April 7-8pm at the Grove

Audition rehearsals for Eva, Che and Peron:

Thursdays 18th and 25th April 7-8pm at the Grove

Auditions for Eva, Che and Peron:

Sunday 28th April 2pm at Haslemere Hall

First rehearsal for chorus and principals:

Tuesday 4th June 7:30pm at the Grove

Remaining auditions (Magaldi, Mistress, children):

Sunday 9th June: 2:30 at the Grove (details to follow)

We aim to make Evita an exciting and enjoyable experience for everyone involved, and we warmly invite you to the Presentation Evening on 16th April!

Your production team,

Adrian, Lizzie, Mandy and Sally



GRAPEVINE NEWS OF MEMBERS

It was lovely to see Anthony Ramsden at last night's 'Mansfield Park' in the Haslemere Hall. Anthony is still at the Woking Rehabilitation Centre following his severe stroke a couple of months ago, but was allowed out to come and see the opera. I was delighted to see that he was upright and walking well and he hopes it won't be too long before he is back with us all.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Doris Palmer back in November at the grand age of over 100! Doris was the mother of Rae Boxall and for some years she was a regular at the Studio on Saturday mornings when Doreen, Teresa and Fay met each week to sort out the costumes. She was a real character and our thoughts go to Rae on her loss.

All our thoughts and prayers are very much with Rachel Perkins who has been in Intensive Care at the Royal Surrey since Christmas. Rachel has pancreatitis and she is still undergoing treatment. Although she cannot receive visitors at present, I know you will all join me in sending best wishes to her and to her parents, Ann and Ray.

As many of you may know, Sue Farley is undergoing radiotherapy treatment at present. She is her usual upbeat, feisty self, and has asked me to thank all those lovely people who have sent her cards and messages.



Dates for Your Diary

- 26 – 30 March **The Gondoliers** in Haslemere Hall
2 April An Evening of Love **Show Stoppers** Presentation Evening
- 16 April **Presentation of Evita** at the Grove at 7pm
18 & 25 April **Evita** Audition rehearsals at the Grove 7pm
27 April **Players Spring Ceildh** 7.15pm
28 April **Evita Principal Auditions** Haslemere Hall 2pm
- 9 – 11 May **84 Charing Cross Road** by the Haslemere Thespians
- 22 – 25 May **Made in Dagenham** by the Grayshott Stagers
31 May & 1 Jun **Show Stoppers** in Haslemere Hall
4 June First rehearsal for Evita
9 June Remaining auditions for Evita 2.30 p.m. at the Grove
- 11 – 15 June **Titanic** by FAOS
22 – 26 Oct **Evita** in Haslemere Hall

Contributions to the Newsletter to
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