

## Spring 2017 - 'The Drowsy Chaperone'

A standing ovation brought to an end an amazing week which started well and just got better and better! Opening Night came and went in a blur but, lifted by the applause of an appreciative audience, we looked forward with renewed confidence to an excellent week's run - confidence which was born out by the excellent performances, all of which were very well received. Looking back, Spring was suddenly upon us before we even realised it was New Year, and after that the time until show week loomed large went really quickly. Our second All Day rehearsal showed just how far we had come though, in that after some "brushing up" of choreography in the morning we were able to have a go at an almost full run of the show in the afternoon. This was not exactly "performance standard", shall we say, (!) but definitely encouraging. It also gave the ensemble a much better idea of how their routines fitted in with the scenes which the principals had been setting - some of which were hilarious!

After that it was just a question of ensuring that all scenes had been fully set before we transferred to the Public Hall so we could check how things looked on the actual stage. Answer? Somewhat different of course, as it always is, but definitely a case of "we have a show". The only elements missing were the band and the full stage set, but we got to see both of these at the Technical rehearsal - and very good they were, too! Really lifted the whole feeling of the action on stage.

And assuming you've been out of the country for several months, you might not know what extravaganza we are actually presenting. Well, we had been looking at possibilities for 2017 and beyond for quite a while, with many modern shows being considered along with more traditional favourites. Building on our desire to bring more "unusual" shows to the stage, we eventually decided to present 'The Drowsy Chaperone' as our show for the spring, directed by Martin Clarke & Jon Gibbs with choreography in the trusty hands (or should that be feet?) of Jean Cator.

To chase his blues away, a modern day musical theatre addict known simply as "Man In Chair" drops the needle on his favourite LP - the 1928 musical comedy 'The Drowsy Chaperone'. From the crackle of his hi-fi, the uproariously funny musical magically bursts into life on stage, telling the tale of a pampered Broadway starlet who wants to give up show business to get married, her producer who sets out to sabotage the nuptials, her chaperone, the debonair groom, the dizzy chorine, the Latin lover and a pair of gangsters who double as pastry chefs. Ruses are played, hi-jinks occur, and the plot spins everyone into musical comedy euphoria. Man In Chair's infectious love of 'The Drowsy Chaperone' speaks to anyone who has ever been transported by the theatre.

Everyone had a chance to find out about the show by coming to the Preview Evening on 31st October in Quaker Hall, Beccles, and the Principals' Auditions, held on 14th & 16th November, then gave the Panel a lot to think about despite there being not quite so many candidates as usual. Indeed, they had to have a second go at it in early December, and then there was a further re-shuffle in late February! Casting decisions were eventually reached though, so those taking us back to the heady days of the 1920's were:-

Man In Chair - Jason Lambert                      Janet Van de Graaf -      Natasha Bird                      Robert  
Martin -                      Daniel Hughes

The Drowsy Chaperone -                      Debbie Lambert                      George -                      Baden Aldridge  
Mrs. Tottendale -                      Sarah Cook

Underling -                      Peter Simmen                      Aldolpho -                      Tommy McGee                      Mr. Feldzieg -  
John Hammond

Kitty - Jayne Andrew                      Gangsters -                      Alice Cushing & Daisy Tyrell-Kent

Trix - Emily Holt                      Superintendant -                      James Horsley