



FIDDLER on the ROOF

at

THE AVON HALL
THE ROYAL SPA CENTRE
LEAMINGTON SPA

MONDAY, 2nd OCTOBER
to
SATURDAY, 7th OCTOBER
7.30 P.M.

(By arrangement with Chappell and Company Limited)



Leamington Spa Opera Group

The Cast of Characters

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| TEVYE, the milkman | Ken Wilkinson |
| GOLDE, his wife | Audrey Hemuss |
| TZEITEL | Carole Morgan |
| HODEL | Jill Grant |
| CHAVA | Jenny Mallorie |
| SHPRINTZE | Janice Kerambrum |
| BIELKE | Karen Griffiths & Penny van Spall |
| YENTE, the matchmaker | Carole Davies |
| MOTEL, the tailor | John Fenner |
| PERCHIK, the student | John K. Lynes |
| LAZAR WOLF, the butcher | Derek J. Rawlings |
| MORDCHA, the innkeeper | Martin Mallorie |
| RABBI | Bill Waken |
| MENDEL, his son | Richard C. Reading |
| AVRAM, the bookseller | Philip Highley |
| NACHUM, the beggar | William Nealon |
| GRANDMA TZEITEL | Pauline Keen |
| FRUMA-SARAH | Jane Weller |
| CONSTABLE | John Spencer |
| FYEDKA | William Bosworth |
| SHANDEL, Motel's mother | Joy Soden |
| THE FIDDLER | Ian Stevens |

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Ohwyn Ayres | Julia Godfrey | Pat Schumacher |
| Jean Brown | Helen Henderson | Zara Taken |
| Linda Connolly | Jenny Mackenzie | Jane Thornbarrow |
| Joyce Dally | Hilary Nealon | Joyce Welch |
| Elizabeth Fox | Mary Reading | Margaret Whitfield |
| Sue Saunders | Sue Saunders | Noreen Wood |
| John Chapman | Nick Goodwin | Richard Nealon |
| George Coombes | Normand Gordon | Rod Plastow |
| David Court | John Heritage | John Stephens |
| Paul Dononey | Keith Malin | Roland Wood |
| Neville French | Brendan Murphy | John Zetterstrom |

with THE BEAUCHAMP SINFONIETTA

Wardrobe Mistress ANN SAUNDERS
Assisted by BETTY READING, SANDRA ROBBINS

Producer DOROTHY DILLAM
Choreographer ALWYN PROBERT

Scenery by CAPE'S OF CHISWICK

Fiddler on one string

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF — at the Royal Spa Centre, Leamington, until Saturday.

"FIDDLER is an essentially generic quality about this show which some of us have thought might be beyond the scope of a conventional amateur musical society.

While it would be untrue to say that this British amateur premiere does anything to seriously dispel these doubts, there are compensations. The Leamington Spa Opera Group in collective terms sing pretty well for the most part — a factor which helps to enhance this story of a Jewish community in Czarist Russia at the turn of the century.

Ken Wilkinson has clearly worked hard on his portrayal of the central character, the milkman Tevye, and the result is a thoroughly charming performance which wants only a little more size.

It is a pity though that in the conversations he has with God that the Almighty is sitting in the fourth row of the stalls. Professional performers have usually placed him rather higher.

CREDITABLE

Audrey Hemuss sings a great deal better than she acts in the part of Tevye's wife, Golde, and there are performances to catch the eye from Jill Grant and Carole Davies.

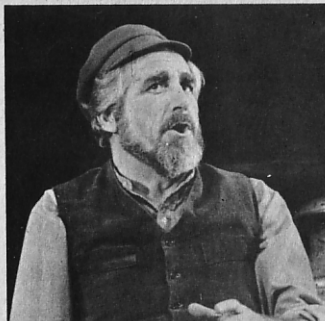
The Beauchamp Sinfonietta perform very creditably under the baton of David Tall, but it would be idle to pretend that the largely undistinguished setting matches the musical quality of the show.

Indeed, Dorothy Dillam's production is frankly one-paced — and that pace is pedestrian. The choreography is virtually non-existent and some of the dialogue barely audible.

There are the compensations, I've already outlined — but this is a production which only emphasises the sort of problems with which amateurs who choose to stage the show will have to contend.

David Isaacs

Poor turn-out for 'Fiddler'



Ken Wilkinson takes the leading role in the Leamington Spa Opera Group's production of "Fiddler on the Roof," which opened at the Spa Centre on Monday. Ken plays Tevye the village milkman — the part created by Topol in the original West End show.

A disappointingly small audience witnessed a memorable opening production of "Fiddler on the Roof" by the Leamington Spa Opera Group on Monday.

Rows and rows of empty seats at the opening night seemed to mock the efforts of a talented cast.

Nevertheless, the few who came were treated to a highly entertaining evening.

Despite the high standard, one man stood head and shoulders above the rest. Ken Wilkinson, in the lead role of Tevye, the milkman, pulled out all the stops to provide a faultless performance.

The dry humour and stubborn pride of this character was brought out to the full by Ken who danced and sang his heart out.

Strongly supported by Audrey Hemuss, as his wife, Golde, the couple's powerful voices rang out the troubles of a persecuted race.

The small but enthusiastic audience was drawn into the tiny Russian village of Anatevka, and for a few wonderful hours, the outside world was forgotten.

Under pressure from an anti-semitic Tsar, and questioned by a new radical generation, Anatevka clings to its traditions.

Tevye's five daughters are growing up into a free-thinking society which questions all he believes in. His problem is whether to hang on to the past or bend to

the wind of change.

In a number of poignant soliloquies, Tevye weighs his old beliefs against the new, and it seems that the whole village waits for his decisions. The production is fast-moving, colourful and performed with a zest rarely found outside professional circles.

The local opera group made a sensible decision in choosing Fiddler, and succeeded in proving wrong those who thought it was an over-ambitious choice.

Dorothy Dillam has produced the show with verve and imagination. Credit is also due to Alwyn Probert for the choreography.

Carole Davies as Yente, the matchmaker, is impressive as she sets about arranging marriages of Tevye's daughters. Her choices of husbands are not always popular, and this causes a number of headaches for the milkman.

In turn, Tzeitel (Carole Morgan), Hodel (Jill Grant), and Chava (Jenny Mallorie) are married. Their performances are delightful.

This musical extravaganza is enhanced by the spirited accompaniment of the Beauchamp Sinfonietta.

Prestige production has pitfalls

"FIDDLER on the Roof" has been awaited by many amateurs with something of the same enthusiasm that surrounded the release of "The Sound of Music" and "My Fair Lady."

In staging, characterization, and ideas, it has more pitfalls than these put together.

In clinching what they believe to be the amateur premiere, Leamington Spa Opera Group have earned a deal of prestige; but their production also serves to pinpoint the problems inherent in this delightful, distinctive and topical show.

It is on this week at The Avon Hall, at the Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa.

It is accompanied extremely well by the Beauchamp Sinfonietta and conducted with feeling and assertion by the society's musical director, David Tall. Alwyn Probert is choreographer.

Dorothy Dillam's production has warmth and simplicity



yet calls for much more light and shade, and more vigorous contrasts of mood, more subtlety in timing.

It would gain from better projection and more highly developed technique in choreography.

Details like some very false looking beards need attention, too.

Ken Wilkinson has a very good and persuasive manner as Tevye, the milkman whose

traditions, family and even his home in a Jewish community in eastern Russia are crumbling in the changing world of 1905. But his conversations with the Almighty could be more effective.

Audrey Hemuss is a strong, bustling and well sung Golde, his wife.

Jill Grant as Hodel comes over, perhaps, best of all. John Fenner as Motel the tailor and John K. Lynes as Perchik, the student, offer good performances, too.

J. D.

CRITIC RATING**

