

Walsall Operatic Society

50 Golden Years

Founded in 1955 by Arthur Foxall and Harold Law, both local businessmen the **Walsall & District Amateur Operatic Society** stated in its rule book that its objects were:

"... to raise money for charitable purposes and in so doing to provide members with the opportunity to study and to take part in performances of operatic, choral and similar works. Also to foster and encourage amateur talent in such arts."

Since those days long ago, the Society has gone from strength to strength, performing over 60 different shows, as well as numerous concerts, recording a CD and supporting local and national charity events. Although in the 1978/80 season the name of the Society was changed to the present **Walsall Operatic Society**, the aims of entertainment and encouragement of musical development remain the same.

In the newspaper review of the first show in 1956 concern was expressed that there was no dedicated theatre in Walsall to accommodate such organisations and their performances. Sadly, those wishes continue to be unrewarded. So this year the show once again finds a home in Lichfield.

Instead of our usual list of shows, this pull-out supplement records, in words and pictures, *50 Golden Years* of Walsall Operatic Society. See how many familiar faces you can spot!



1956 - The Gypsy Princess.

The Gypsy Princess was the first production of the Walsall and District Amateur Operatic Society. Performed at W R Wheway School, Walsall. The show ran for 4 performances.



1957 - Pink Champagne.

1958: Maid Of The Mountains

1959: The Quaker Girl

1959: The Gypsy Baron

1960: Waltz Time



1960: The Mikado (concert version)

1961: Iolanthe (concert version)

1962: The Gondoliers (concert)

1961: Night In Venice

1962: The Desert Song

1964: The Mikado

1963: Land Of Smiles

1964: Iolanthe

1965: The Yeomen of the Guard

1964: White Horse Inn



1965: Maritza

1967: Goodnight Vienna

1966: The Arcadians

1967: The Gondoliers

1968: The Pirates of Penzance
& Trial By Jury

1968: The Count of Luxembourg

1969: The Vagabond King

1970 : Gypsy Love

1971: The Merry Widow

1970: Ruddigore



1972: Orpheus in the Underworld

1973: Carousel

1974: The New Moon

1975: Oklahoma!



1976: La Vie Parisienne

1977: Summer Song

1979: Annie Get Your Gun

1978: The Gypsy Baron

1980: The Bird Seller, 25th Anniversary Production and a new name: WALSALL OPERATIC SOCIETY



1981: The Desert Song

1983: La Belle H el ene

1982: Waltzes From Vienna

1984: Naughty Marietta

1985 : White Horse Inn our first production at Lichfield Civic Hall



1986: Show Boat

1987: Kiss Me Kate

1987: The Merry Widow

1988: Oklahoma!

1989: Finian's Rainbow

1990: The Pajama Game

1992: Fiddler On The Roof

1993: Guys and Dolls

1994: Pirates of Penzance (Broadway Version)

1991 : Hello, Dolly!



1995: Carousel



1996: My Fair Lady

1998: Kiss Me Kate

1997: The Music Man

1999: Singin' In The Rain

2000: Oliver!



2001: Oklahoma!

2003: Calamity Jane,
at Sutton Town Hall

2002: At The Hop! (1950's and 60's Cabaret)
at the Bescot Stadium

2004: Annie, at the Lichfield Garrick Theatre



2005: Hello, Dolly! - Our Golden Jubilee
Production

Interesting facts about Hello, Dolly! - Stage & Film

Hello, Dolly! had an unusually lengthy history. Its first version in 1835, was a London play *A Day Well Spent* by John Oxenford. Seven years later *Einen Jux will er sich machen* (*He Intends To Have a Fling*), a Viennese variation by Johann Nestroy, was produced. In 1938 Thornton Wilder turned the Nestroy play into *The Merchant of Yonkers* and 17 years after that he rewrote it as *The Matchmaker*. Both Wilder plays had Broadway runs. Another forerunner of *Hello, Dolly!* was the 1891 musical, *A Trip to Chinatown*.

Hello, Dolly! Opened on Broadway in 1964 and immediately took the Theatre world by storm, winning 10 Tony awards - a record which still stands - and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for "Best Musical". It ran continuously for just under seven years - 2,844 performances.

During 1995's pre-Broadway tour of *Hello, Dolly!*, Carol Channing received Broadway's highest honor: a Lifetime Achievement Tony Award, only the second time in Broadway's history that this award has been given to anyone.

This section has been kindly sponsored by:

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