



Society : Crowthorne Musical Players  
Production : Carousel  
Date : May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
Venue : Wilde Theatre, South Hill Park  
Report by : Steve Bold, NODA Representative, District 14

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## Report

From the start with a scale Carousel in the overture to the majestic and moving strains of the emotional *'You'll Never Walk Alone'*, this oft performed musical remains timeless and enjoyable! A poignant story of the misled and conflicted Billy and the romantic ever hoping Julie is a powerful piece of theatre. Forgive the pun, but Carousel keeps coming around and societies performing the show need to work exceptionally hard to retain and audiences interest in the well known story line. I'm delighted to say that the Crowthorne Musical Players did just that in a production that had an air of freshness about it. By involving the many chorus and fairground workers in well devised routines throughout the show, the scenes were always full of life, even those scenes that had smaller numbers involved seem to fill the stage. The society is indeed fortunate to have such experienced principals at its disposal and they, together with a well trained chorus and a first class orchestra, ensured a memorable production.

### **Stuart Hayllor, Billy Bigelow**

Stuart Hayllor as Billy had a good voice and performed his 'Soliloquy' well, but I felt that he could have showed us a little more emotion in some parts of his acting to be more convincing, specifically his anguish and despair at discovering he was dead. Although the expression as he said his goodbyes at the end was very good.

### **Emily Austin, Julie Jordan**

Emily Austin was well cast as Julie giving a sound performance and was very good vocally, possessing a fine talent and showing a deep understanding of the demands of the character, emotionally and aesthetically.

### **Danusia Maleczek, Mrs Mullin**

Congratulations to Danusia as Mrs Mullin who was very convincing in both her acting and her accent. She was very in your face with her desires and the way she thought Billy would always come back.

### **Jenny Green, Carrie Pipperidge**

Carrie played by Jenny Green was just right for the part and expressed her character well both in her acting and excellent singing. There was the right amount of innocence at the beginning and then still heartened friendship but with an element of superiority as she became a wife and mother.

### **Malcolm Wellard, Enoch Snow**

Malcolm Wellard presented an easy going character when he first entered as Enoch Snow, but his true upright and stiff character came through, there was humour in how he presented himself and pomposity in his feeling of superiority over others as well.

**Louise Herrington, Nettie Fowler**

Louise Herrington as Nettie performed the show stopping song "You'll Never Walk Alone" with ease, but I thought there could have been more gusto in the chorus. Louise brought a beautiful tenderness to the role of Nettie, the welcoming and never judging mother figure for all the lost souls around her.

**Tony Slevin, Jigger Craigin**

This was a lovely menacing role from Tony Slevin as Jigger Craigin. He slunk around the stage, popping up every now and again with a word in Billy's ear. He looked the part in his stripy top, big black coat and hat pulled down tight. There was a good deal of danger in his eyes throughout his performance.

**Robyn Heffer, Louise**

A very energetic performance from Robyn Heffer as Louise, spending a good portion of her introduction utilising the entire stage in her dance. She moves well and has a fine element of grace in the way she dances. There was also a steely emotion in the delivery of her lines, this was a fine performance.

**Tony Kershaw, David Bascombe**

Only part of the action fairly briefly, but Tony had the air of a father figure in his dealing with Julie and Carrie. His confidence when confronted by Jigger and Billy was also well played, showing he was a man of power and not afraid of those who would deprive him.

**Maxine Robinson, Heavenly Friend**

A simple role in the movement and indicative nature, maintaining her facial expression throughout as Billy asked his question, just a wave of the arm to show him the way.

**Rebecca Wire, Arminy**

A small cameo role, but still noticeable and important to the greater whole.

**Mark Connolly, Starkeeper/Dr Seldon**

Two different characters from Mark, both completely individual. I did enjoy his role of the Starkeeper, I thought he put this across in much the same way as the similar characters in such classic films as A Matter of Life and Death.

**Enoch Snow Jnr - John Dillon, Snow Children - Maddie Bruce, Ben Cameron, Frankie Francis, Rachel Heffer, Ola Szymaniec. Town Children - Hannah Bennett, Daniel Dyer, Jasmine Dyer Townsfolk, Sailors, Ensemble - Becky Burton, Christine Charlton, Angie Chitty, Sue Dyer, Derry Ferguson, Sue Ford, Sharne Goulding, Doreen Hart, Roger Lansdown, Susanne Lee, Simon Light, Don MacDonald, Rita de Matos, Sue Minshall, Nyck Moore, Helen Nicholson, Chrissy Pask, Candy Price, Faye Tims, Paul Tysoe, Patricia Chidgey, Mary Unwin, Janet Winn, Malcolm Winslade, Chris Wood**

Such a large cast is very difficult to keep occupied and enthused throughout a performance, a rehearsal period and backstage, but this was an inviting presentation from all those creating the background to the show. The children were marvellous, looking a little lost sometimes from the young ones, but as in life they were led with maturity by the older ones.

The townsfolk also fulfilled their parts without ever seeming to drop their characters, everyone looked the part presenting themselves as part of the town itself, a part of the greater whole. Their movement in the crowd and ensemble scenes was never unnecessary, there was purpose and definition across the entire stage.

### **Costumes, Lighting, Make Up, Programme**

Costumes were good with noticeable attention to detail such as the old -fashioned braces and white tights. Make up was well presented with the ladies wearing what would have been suitable for the period and their social standing, with the men having as little make up as suitably necessary. Lighting and sound complemented the well-presented production, although there were a couple of occasions when the mics didn't quite come in at the right moment.

The programme cover was most original and the contents are interesting to read. Everyone involved in the show played their part to make it a success and they are to be congratulated. It was a very good show and thoroughly enjoyable.

### **Choreographer, Debbie Mann - Principal Dancers - Gillian Albone, Sophie Austin, Erin Pharo, Amanda Whewell, Stuart Woods**

The principal dancers shone throughout their routines, they seemed so light on their feet and moved so easily as couples, individuals and were also in time with each other.

The choreography was first class, different dances taking place in different areas of the stage, but all complimenting the whole impression. A delightful visual performance.

### **Nick Austin, Musical Director**

The large orchestra was always tuneful and kept well under control by Musical Director Nick Austin. Once again the male and female chorus singing was excellent with good harmonies. All the cast gave good performances. The musical direction was good alongside the choreography. It was well directed and had a good pace throughout and back stage worked well.

### **Mark Connolly, Director**

By and large the audience was presented with a good enjoyable evening's entertainment and positioning within the stage area was well executed. It had been well cast with some good characterisations being brought out of the principals. The large chorus also worked well and exhibited a joy of performing which certainly came across to the audience, the background characters maintaining the fantasy of theatre throughout. Entrances and exits were well used, with characters not entering and exiting past other members of the cast coming and going. This was an accomplished and polished performance by a seasoned group of actors and actresses. Well done to one and all.