

## BRILLIANT PRODUCTION OF "CAROUSEL"

### EAST SURREY OPERATIC SOCIETY SCORE AGAIN

"Music by Richard Rodgers; book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II". That, if ever there was one is certainly a formula for success in the world of popular musicals, and at the Market Hall, Redhill, this week the East Surrey Operatic Society are presenting "Carousel", held by many to be the finest work of the gifted American composer-lyricist team. Just a year ago, the Society achieved a notable success with another equally famous Rodgers and Hammerstein musical - "Oklahoma". With that production, Elsie Rendell set a remarkably high standard for an amateur company. Now, with "Carousel," and given the solid support by an enthusiastic and talented cast, Miss Rendell has done it again.

As Billy Bigelow, Andrew Glass is tailor-made for the part. Big, brash and yet likeable, his Billy strides through the production and there is not a false move, a wrong inflection in a part that calls for considerable acting as well as vocal ability. His singing of the beautiful yet difficult "Soliloquy" is a highlight of the evening, and he is given splendid support by Jigger and a full throated chorus in the rousing "Blow High, Blow Low". As Laurey in the Society's production of "Oklahoma", Molly Greaves showed that she has a close affinity with Richard Rogers' music, and as the petite and pretty Julie, she is perfectly cast and again is in fine voice with some very attractive numbers, among the best of which are "If I Loved You" (a charming duet with Billy) and the lilting "What's the use of Wond'rin".

While Billy and Julie are the staves around which the main plot is woven, the production is leavened most attractively with a sub-plot which concerns the courtship and marriage of Julie's friend, Carrie and the staid, respectable Mr. Snow. Mary Penny makes Carrie a thoroughly engaging character, showing a cheeky smile here, a shapely ankle there and warming the audience to heart with the delightful "When I Marry Mr Snow" and "When the Children are Asleep". As the rather fussy, strait-laced Enoch Snow, Eugene Crawley contributes a cameo which is rich in enjoyment, and Jack Brough gives a truly first-class portrait of the rascally Jigger. Gillian Hayter is sound as the unprincipled Mrs. Mullin, Billy's fairground employer, and Sheila Hobbs is sympathetic and understanding as Nettie; her acting and vocal talents reached their peak in the haunting "You'll Never Walk Alone".

Valuable contributions to the action of the dramatic closing scenes are given by Douglas Chantler (Heavenly Friend) and Don Nicol (Starkeeper and, later, Dr. Seldon), while as the teenage Louise Sandra Macdonald dances delightfully and acts out the scene where she comes e to face with Billy for the first - and last - time with great tenderness.

From the opening, crowded Carousel Waltz sequence - splendidly handled on a stage which must have imposed some limitations - to the rousing finale, the entire production goes with a swing, and not for a moment does the action sag. The chorus work is particularly good, and dance sequences cleverly handled. In this connection, mention must be made of John Pearch, who as the Carnival Boy in the ballet scene and as a monkey-jacketed sailor in the lively Hornpipe episode dances with a firm but easy grace. The show is colourfully dressed, the scenery readily conjures up the required, images and the orchestra - supplied by the Redhill Society of Instrumentalists under the leadership of Audrey Mayes - is firmly yet sensitively conducted by Robin Gritton, whose assistant is Stanley Collett.

Those in the cast not already mentioned are: William Fry (First Policeman), Godfrey Hill (David Bascombe), Audrey Nightingale (Hannah), Joyce Gascoigne-Pees (Arminy), Paul Elliott (Second Policeman), Tony Trollope (Captain), Laurie Elliston (Enoch Snow, jnr.); characters in ballet, Nadine Waters, Christine Atkinson, Gay Rhoden, Trevor Chantler, Richard Hill, Elizabeth Hobbs, John Morris and Lorna Packington; ladies and gentlemen of the chorus, Anne Bailey, Delia Barkby,

Eve Brough, Sheena Dunn, Victoria Fogden, Joan Gascoigne-Pees, Julie Glass, Gladys Goldsmith, Noreen Hare,. Diane Huxtable, Christine Pearch, Winifred Peel, Alison Porteus, Irene Skinner, Sheila Smith, Harry Barber,,Peter Davidson, Harold Dibben, John Gascoigne-Pees, Keith Nightingale, Stanley Nightingale, Denzil Scott and William Waters; dancers, Felicity Goodey, Diana Moseley, Kathleen Skelton, Susan Webb and Monica Webber.