

This was a particularly good choice of 'play' for your Company. Roger Parsley has put together the 3 elements of the Music Hall - the 'on stage', the 'back stage', and the 'other life' the artistes, the girls in particular, led. I feel he has filled quite a gap in the amateur repertoire. It is so much harder than one realises to put together a good balanced programme for a Music Hall and here we not only have the balance of the set pieces, but bet to know the characters a bit, yet as he says 'it is not intended wholly to recreate an exact replica of a performance, not to delve too deeply into social history'. But you still have the opportunity to put over a Music Hall song, take part in a Double Act or be part of the Chorus, as well as shew us some truthful acting.

What and who do you need for a successful show? You must have good musicians, both on and off the stage, those on stage need to be able to act as well because of the view we have of back stage life. A good accompanist is essential. But all this is nothing without what is probably the most important of all for a Music Hall - a very good Master of Ceremonies, without this the whole show, however good the individual acts are, somehow falls apart. This last is probably the most difficult to cast, your MC has to be receptive to the audience and you cannot tell how good he will be, till you have an audience..

#### PRESENTATION

Set This was good. The back cloth of the dressing room worked well. The mechanism of lowering and raising the curtain midstage did slow the proceedings down a bit, I doubt there was anything that could be done about this. Is it the first time it has been used I dont remember it from your previous shows.

Furniture Very little necessary for a show of this kind. A good lamp post that appeared when needed, tables and chairs for the sailors, an area DR that was dressed to look like a Box, and the MC's desk. All these worked well.

Properties Not very many, but the sailors' and Lord Harleston's drinks, and the numbers for shewing us what item was on stage were good, but I felt could have been of stronger card, these would not have lasted a long run! Good personal properties, baskets of fruit, parasols etc. (it is clever how we never actually see the diamond necklace)

Costumes and Hair Always good in your company. Here several changes for people, in, I know, very little space, but you all looked well turned out, with some really lovely hats. Care had been taken with hair styles. It does make such a difference. The Policemen looked just right, truncheons at the ready!

Make up This was good, but dont forget to touch up as the evening progresses, with movement and heat it tends to disappear a bit.

Lighting This was good and effective, some good areas of light for the solo acts. Generally well timed FOH lighting when the audience was to join in the choruses.

Sound effects Few - screams by the girls and the gun shot - but effective.

## PRODUCTION

Use of space Stage with the apron and the hall were all used very skilfully. Lord H's Box used the corner perfectly, as did the MC's desk. Rushing round the hall was fun by the Policemen, and several of the cast came down into the audience during their numbers which is always good. I liked the use of the US area for the dressing room, a convention which worked well.

Grouping This covers what the stage looked like at any one time (do forgive repetition those of you who have read me before, but I always feel there maybe someone who is reading an adjudication for the first time, and does not know what I am talking about.) The stage looked good almost all the time, there was little masking, and what there was was only momentary.

Movement This on the whole was good and fast. The set pieces of big chorus numbers were well rehearsed and sure, with enough movement to make them interesting and not bitty. The knockabout of the Policemen was splendid - much enjoyed by everyone, except perhaps by the little one who kept getting hit on the head, and whose reaction was so good.

Entrances and Exits Entrances and exits are so important. Entrances lift the show - a new character or a new interest. They were good and the characters each made an impact with their characterisation at once. Exits were good and sure.

Interpretation This was good in parts. The Policemen were particularly good, they maintained their manic behaviour throughout. I felt the MC was too tentative, and on the whole not enough was made of the solo acts with one or two notable exceptions, more of this in a minute.

Teamwork This was good, the duo acts were particularly well rehearsed, and one felt the players at Hewlett's Music Hall all knew each other well.

Pace When a programme is by its very nature as fragmented as a Music Hall is, the acts must follow as quickly as possible. Each act should build on the audience's interest at the level the last act left it. If there is a space or pause and the atmosphere of entertainment has dropped it is that much more difficult for the following act to succeed. This is why the MC has to be in absolute control and positive, so that when one act finishes, we are in his capable hands as he introduces the following turn. There were several occasions that I felt the atmosphere had been lost (not only by the interruptions by Lord H and Gentleman Jim) and we needed 'to get on' with the show.

Performance Numbers (a very good idea to have these listed, and most helpful for me)  
A good Overture. What a splendid pianist, a real accompanist, always most sympathetic to the singers.

Get On Down To The Music Hall Tonight A really good rousing opening number. Well sung well dressed with smiling faces to put us in a good mood, glad we had come! We were not quite sure whether we should join in the chorus, as not everyone had found the words in their programmes. Possibly the MC should have pointed this out to us a bit more emphatically.

2. Oh, Ever So Sad. Sung well by Rosie, but not nearly enough was made of this number dramatically. There is quite a lot to be wrung out of the words, and I felt you did not do this, you could have so much more of this song.
  3. The Ramportis A very good duo here. A bit slow I thought but very thoughtful. Very good movement among the audience.
  4. A right Ding-Dong Another rousing number, enjoyed by everyone.
  5. Sid's Socks I wondered how this would go down, it went down very well - good timing on the whole and a very good relationship between the pair of you leading to the outburst off stage.
  6. Joe: Or I 'Dont Care What They Call Him A very good performance of this heart rending song. Very dramatic and well understood. A highlight of the evening for me.
  7. Hinvestigations This I enjoyed enormously. I am sure different every time you did it. But all very concerned with doing it right yet each completely involved in his/her performance. And very very funny.
  - 8 Johnny Jones A good number to end the first half.
  9. Rosemary Lane A super full chorus. Again very well dressed with members coming down into the audience. We were right back in the Music Hall atmosphere. Well done.
  10. Ooh, Its a Big 'Un A very good self satisfied performance here. Well sung, good movement round the audience with good backing from the girls.
  11. With a Laugh and a Smile Fast banter from Mills and Crowley, very well timed. One had the feeling this had been going on for ever (no wonder Mills wanted to split up)
  12. Why Doesnt Nobody Want Me? A perfectly gnastly number. I can never understand why this sort of number is so popular. Brilliantly done! I think this is what amazes me. Congratulations.
  13. Oh What'll I do? Much more could have been made of this dramatically. You looked good and held your poses well but there was no gut feeling there. I think there should be to make it special. This song needed much more production.
  14. I'm Going to Say "Yes", If He Asks Me Well sung, but could have been more interesting. It could have had more depth. You almost involved Lord H and the MC but not quite, I think you could have. We are nearly at the end of the show, so you should be striving for the heights. You are Top of the Bill.
  - 15 All For Your Delight Well sung by Mary and Gentleman Jim. Do remember that when singing a duet that you should not stand facing each other, but at an angle so that the audience can at least see half of your face, not just both of you in profile. If you stand at an angle, is your upstage <sup>too</sup> in front, you can turn to the audience and to your partner.
- Finale All For Your Delight a good chorus number well sung, followed by  
 Reprise Get On Down To the Music Hall Tonight Full company, all singing and smiling, a very good end to the show.

### Individual Performances

George Bell, Chairman The whole tenor of the show rests on your opening words. It is very very difficult to start cold and lift the awaiting audience but it is vital that you do this. You then have to maintain this upbeat all the time between the acts so that the atmosphere does not drop and each 'turn' can build on what the previous one has achieved. I enjoyed your jokes, or rather shaggy dog stories, but did we have to have three? Maybe we did to cover changes backstage? But they did hold up the show, <sup>possibly because of your slow delivery</sup> I felt your whole performance needed more apparent energy, the whole evening rests on your shoulders, you have to propel it along. Possibly with a long run you would have worked your way into the 'part'. It is so much more difficult than one ever imagines.

Lord Randolph Harleston A good portrayal of an aristocrat used to having his own way. He had the money! I felt you based yourself on Peter Bowles and this was a good idea but you have to be aristocratic all the time; don't forget when you want to make a large gesture, use the whole arm not just from the elbow, near <sup>the end</sup> when you were being melodramatic wide gestures would have been most effective, you can't convey everything by falling on your knees.

Lucy Lawson Very good portrayal of various characters throughout. Always in the part, whether left behind in the audience, being cross with a fellow chorus member or coming on at the end with the news of the death of Lord Harleston, and then instinctive bobbing first to the new Lord and then to Mary. A performance I enjoyed very much.

Rosie Oakes A good performance throughout, but I would have liked more drama in your solo, and the irony of your position with your Lord having ditched you would have been pointed up. What a shame you lost your lines at the end.

Lizzie Lockhart A strong performance all the way through. A very good performance of your song with all the drama and feeling required to make it stand out amongst the others.

Annie Hughes A good Music Hall performance throughout every thing, acting and reacting all the time. You always look so good too, but much more could have been made of 'Oh What'll I do?' It nearly came to life when you advanced on the sailors, <sup>at the end.</sup>

Albert Stoppard A good member of the company, always acting and reacting and very much enjoying the chorus work. A very good solo with 'Ooh what a big 'un' and good repartee with the girls.

Lionel Rampart and Primrose Rampart A very good duo here. He very much in charge, but would be completely at a loss without her. Good natural scene when 'backstage'.

Gentleman Jim A very good contrasting performance. Looking good you were confident and obviously enjoyed being a Policeman etc. But do remember though singing to Mary at the end, we do want to see your face as well and your facial expression, so stand close and at an angle.

Mary Molloy Do try to make a bit more of your songs. You have a good singing voice, now do try to think the lines a bit more, and so make us believe why it is you have already done one performance at an up market Music Hall and are top of the bill here.

Alex Mills and Basil Crowley A good duo on stage. Back stage Alex really <sup>let</sup> rip but was not backed up sufficiently by Basil, so the parting was not as poignant as it might have been, which was a shame. But we felt Alex's frustration with his stick in the mud partner. What a life!

Bessie Jakes . A very good Music Hall chorus member, always there with a quip and very much there with the songs, and then there was Arnold. A very good portrayal of this 'orrible kid. Real Music Hall stuff. Well done.

Other members of the Company I know you were chorus members and for this I congratulate you - but who ever were the Policemen got my vote! You were a splendid band and made the evening for me.

An evening with some very good moments, which was enjoyed by your audience very much. There is always so much to learn and so many pit falls, you avoided most of them but were caught by one or two, yet managed to convey not only the Music Hall, out front but back stage as well as the other life very strongly.

We always enjoy coming to your shows - many thanks for having us again.

Rosanne Kirkpatrick

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July 1994