

## Après-Fiddler

[A last note from the musical director]

So another show has ended. Successfully, I hope, though at the time of writing there is still one performance to go. The sets are dismantled and put back in store, the actors and musicians go back to their day jobs, and every one feels a little empty. In a way, the after-show party is a kind of funeral, or possibly a wake — a necessary rite which must be observed to allow the performers to say goodbye to the show. Just how necessary, I discovered many years ago, after I had been playing Schani Strauss in "The Great Waltz"<sup>1</sup>; there wasn't a party on the last night (a Saturday), it was to be held the following Tuesday. My then wife was on duty at the hospital all weekend, and I spent the Sunday alone. By mid-afternoon, I was climbing the walls. It still ranks as one of the worst days of my life.

Being ephemeral, music and drama must be continually recreated to have any real validity, because only when the work is performed can the "ordinary" person hear or see it. The performer has the duty of interpreting the composer's wishes as he or she sees them, from a written form which can never capture all of the nuances that may have been in the composer's mind. It is impossible to know exactly what the composer intended, and therefore no one executant will have a total monopoly of a composer's works. Our performance of Fiddler on the Roof may have had some technical imperfections, but it was a perfectly valid attempt to interpret the wishes of Bock, Stein and Harnick<sup>2</sup> and the live performances were infinitely preferable to any recording.

Please don't get me wrong. It is wonderful to have access to recorded music, and videos of operas and musicals, and so forth, but once you make a recording you have in effect pinned the butterfly to the card. Beautiful they may be — who would be without Jacqueline du Pré's recording of the Elgar 'cello concerto, for example, or Dennis Brain's recordings of the Mozart and Strauss horn concerti? — but nevertheless they are no substitute for a live performance. Of course there will be flaws. There nearly always are. But if you don't take risks, you won't get the chance of a *coup de théâtre* either. And the "continually recreated" bit means that individual shows must eventually come to an end<sup>3</sup>.

I have wanted to do "Fiddler" for a long time, although I didn't really believe I ever would; now, largely thanks to the '95 celebrations, the chance has come my way. But a musical director can't function alone; he is totally dependant on the goodwill of other people in order to have any artistic expression. People who will give large amounts of their spare time and not mind about occasional shortness of temper. People who will turn out on a warm summer's evening when sitting in the garden with a long drink would be preferable by far. The cast and orchestra of Fiddler have done all that and more, and not complained (much!) about late nights and overhot rehearsal rooms. I am deeply grateful to all of you.

But, of course, in the case of musical theatre, the MD is particularly dependant on the director. In Carrie O'Brien, we have had an outstanding director, who has made the show come alive in an extraordinarily powerful way — I have not felt such a spirit of unanimity in a show or a play for a very long time. I cannot thank her enough.

So, onwards and upwards. The Pirates seem to have been reborn with "Fiddler" — now is the time to start planning the next show. What's it to be? Well, that's up to you. Come along to the AGM and discuss it. Don't think that the camaraderie generated during this time together will last forever, for it won't without help. It, like the shows we present, must be continually recreated.



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<sup>1</sup> In Warrington; you can't win them all.

<sup>2</sup> They sound like a firm of New York accountants, don't they? Perhaps they are, when you think of the royalties we were charged.

<sup>3</sup> Unless they are called "The Mousetrap".



## THEATRE

### New Auditions for Fiddler

As part of the Luxembourg Year of Culture, Pirate Productions, a club formed to present light operetta à la Gilbert & Sullivan, will be performing *Fiddler on the Roof* at the theatre at Esch-sur-Alzette from September 29th through to October 3rd.

The show has a professional director in Carrie O'Brien and the orchestra will be under the baton of Alan Carlisle.

Initial auditions were held for the show last year but owing to the uncertainty of the dates and venue and some of the casted performers not being able to commit to the newly fixed dates, the show will be re-auditioned at the Auditorium of the American School next Tuesday, the 21st of February from 7 to 9pm.

The show will also feature a singing chorus and dancers for which a professional choreographer has been recruited. English speaking enthusiasts are always welcome at Pirates and there is an opportunity to join in all aspects of the show - from frontstage singing and/or dancing to backstage scene painting and design. If you would like to participate in any aspect of light entertainment, please call Ken Reid on 346173 or Norman Sinclair-Baines on 473 573 (both working hours) for more information.

### Committee elected at RTP GM

The Round Tower Players held its Annual General Meeting in the Beggen Cultural Centre at the end of January, and elected the following people to serve on its committee for 1995: President, Niall McHale; Vice-President, Maria Nagle; Treasurer, Pat Weldon; Secretary, Kathlyn O'Brien; Members, Carol Mahon, Marie Stefansson and Aoife Tighe.

RTP's main production this year is of course Brian Friel's *Dancing At Lughnasa*, directed by Arlena Nys. It will be performed at the Capucins Theatre from 30 March to 2 April as part of Luxembourg '95 Official Programme. Tickets can already be reserved at the central booking office on tel. 47 08 95.

In November the drama group hopes to hold one of its popular Café Theatre productions featuring two one-act plays. Anyone interested in directing a play for this production should contact Niall McHale on tel. 40 39 59 or Kathleen O'Brien on tel. 35 92 54.

### Wagstaff rides again

Wagstaff, like Destry, rides again and some of his performers are indeed nearly as venerable as Miss Dietrich got to be, although their material is young and attractive. Or something.

Wagstaff, an English-speaking cabaret group, began with a wry look at Shakespeare back in the early eighties and has been turning the great and the good upside down in restaurants and at festivals in the Grand Duchy and abroad ever since. In March, he is back at the Hotel Cravat in the city centre, where, after laughing his way through philosophers, novelists and poets, poking fun at things British and making a valiant attempt to package the Bard of Avon for the American market, he now turns his attention to the great topic of Luxembourg 1995, viz. Culture, whatever that is.

In this new show, Louise Curwen, Hilary Guerra, Stuart Alexander and Graham Fairfax-Jones perform texts by Jane Carter and music by Yvonne Hay and Chris Birch, while Mr Cravat provides an aperitif, a three-course dinners and coffee, all included in the 1,500Fl ticket. the barman will be on hand to sell you any further beverages, alcoholic and otherwise.

Anyone wishing to join Wagstaff's talented and perspicacious audience in the Cravat at 8 p.m. on 10,11,12,17,18 and/or 19 March should book with Pauline on tel. 66 85 79 or Jane on tel. 43 95 93.

### NWTC auditions

Just a quick reminder that auditions for the New World Theatre Club's Spring production will be held soon. The two one-act plays are *Curse* by Sinclair Hamilton and the *Monkey's Paw* by W.W. Jacobs.

Auditions for the three male and three female parts in *Curse* will be held on 21 and 22 February at the Michel Welter School, rue Michel Welter near the Hollerich junction at 7.30 p.m. If you are unable to attend the auditions or would like more information about the roles, call Jo Patrick on tel. 40 16 71.

*The Monkey's Paw* auditions will be held at the Michel Welter School on 7 and 9 March. Again, if you are unable to attend or would like more information contact Karim Hyatt on tel. 35 75 02.

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