

Spring 2005 Production

ANYTHING GOES (Beaumont Version)

Tuesday 17th May – Saturday 21st May, 2005
New Theatre, Oxford

Director – Dave Crewe
Musical Director – Michael Evans
Choreographers – Celia Clark & Joanne Cook
Production Manager – Kerry Chaundy

Introduction

Oxford Operatic Society's next production takes us across the Atlantic Ocean, as we set sail for our Spring 2005 show, *Anything Goes*.

Following our Spring 2004 production of *Kiss Me Kate*, it's also a welcome return to the music of Cole Porter, with some of his greatest hits including *You're The Top*, *It's De-lovely*, *Blow Gabriel Blow*, *I Get a Kick Out of You*, and of course the title number, *Anything Goes*.

Our production will be even more of a voyage of discovery for us, as we return to the New Theatre, the largest theatre in Oxford. This exciting change of venue for the society gives us the chance to reach a much wider audience, as well as the experience of playing in one of the largest theatres in the country.

The most important message about this show is that it is for everyone, of all ages. There will be lots of singing and dancing etc, although please don't be put off if you're not specifically a dancer, as there'll still be huge amounts to do. The only important requirement is enthusiasm!

As a team, we firmly believe the opportunity to perform at the New Theatre in such a 'big' company show offers the chance for a really special experience. We will be (and have already been!) working very hard to put things in place for a truly memorable production. The show will be hard work, but also a **lot** of fun. Everyone will be used a great deal, no-one's time will be wasted, and I can guarantee that the sense of achievement on the opening night will be tremendous.

Talk-in

There can often be a vast amount of information to absorb at a 'Talk-in', so we've tried to give lots of information here instead, so you can refer to it, in your own time. It also means there is less just 'sitting and listening' on the Talk-in night.

The Talk-in evening will be on **Thursday 2nd December, 2004** – (that's the Thursday immediately following our Autumn 2004 production of *Iolanthe* finishes!) – at our normal rehearsal venue, St.Clements' Family Centre. Map available in the 'Join the Society' section of www.oxfordoperatic.co.uk.

At the Talk-in, we will have Rehearsal Schedules, Audition parts, and much more information on the show itself. We will also be learning and setting part of the title number. Don't worry, this won't be too hard, but do bring comfortable clothes, and shoes you can move in (even tap shoes if you can!).

Brief Synopsis

Anything Goes is a typical 1930s musical comedy, more farce than philosophy. There'll be more about the show and its story at the Talk-in, but here's a quick flavour of the plot:

The action takes place aboard the luxury transatlantic liner, the S.S. American, just as the ship is about to set sail. There are many passengers on board, including Billy Crocker, who has stowed away to be with Hope Harcourt, the girl he loves; Hope herself is sailing with her fiancée, Lord Evelyn Oakleigh; Hope's mother Evangeline is travelling too, and is pleased to

find her old acquaintance Elisha Whitney also onboard; Billy's friend Reno Sweeney, a sexy evangelist, has feelings for Billy which aren't reciprocated; and Moonface Martin, (Public Enemy No. 13), and his accomplice Erma, are escaping to England.

Reno and Moonface conspire to split Hope and Evelyn, as they know Hope really loves Billy. Meanwhile, the ship's captain (mis)understands that Billy is actually Snake-Eyes Johnson, Public Enemy No. 1, and charges his sailors with catching the dangerous criminal.

When they catch him, the Captain realises that the ship's passengers are eager to mingle with a celebrity like Snake-Eyes Johnson, and he makes him Honorary Captain of the ship.

Eventually, Billy admits he's just a 'broken down broker' and he and Moonface are imprisoned in the ship's jail. Meanwhile, whilst Hope is realising that Billy is her true love, Evelyn is also coming to terms with the fact that he has feelings for Reno.

With Hope and Evelyn's wedding the next day, desperate measures are resorted to, to ensure a happy ending. Eventually, it comes as no surprise that Billy and Hope marry, along with Reno and Evelyn. To complete the unlikely picture, Elisha proposes to Evangeline.

Don't worry if all this seems confusing. The play is, after all, a farce, and all will become clear... And along the way, there is lots of comedy, romance and show-stopping numbers.

Company, not Chorus

One of the best things about *Anything Goes* is the amount of company work there is. There are no less than five full company numbers – some of the best company numbers ever written for a musical – plus a number of other 'ensemble' numbers.

Anything Goes is very much a 'farce with musical numbers', and we have big plans for these company numbers. However, we don't want just a 'chorus' as such, who come on, sing and dance, and then go off again. We want a true ensemble, who are integral to the whole play.

Because the entire show takes place almost as a continuous scene, every member of the 'company' will have their own character, and most will play these characters for the whole show. There will obviously be sailors (and some of these may play ship guests at certain times), but all the guests will also have individual roles. These will range from honeymooning couples to retired travellers, from tourist guides to nuns! All their moves, dance steps, reactions etc will be consistent with their characters, and I specifically intend to make these characters as much a part of the dialogue scenes, as the principals are. I believe this will greatly add to the authenticity and atmosphere of the scenes.

Approach

The basic approach being taken with the show is to 'set' everything as quickly as possible, so we then have plenty of time for polishing, adding characterisation and running the show.

The first ten weeks will be spent blocking every scene and number, which culminates in a 'Stagger Run' of the show on 20th March, two months before we open. This will then be followed by a week of characterisation workshops, four weeks of polishing, and three weeks of running.

Schedule

We know how frustrating it can be, to be hanging around at rehearsals for hours on end, and so a very detailed Rehearsal Schedule has been drawn up, and we will absolutely ensure that you're only called when you're needed. However, there is an enormous amount to get through, for both Principals and Company, so it is equally very important you are available and ready to start, whenever called.

The schedule will be available at the Talk-in, but we haven't included it here, as it would take up too much space. However, here are some key dates, so they can go straight in the diary!

- Tuesday 30th November – New Member's Auditions
- Thursday 2nd December – Talk-in, and first rehearsal

- Tuesday 7th December – Principal Audition Practise (including setting the audition movement for principals, and those who wish to do more challenging dancing))
- Thursday 9th December – Company rehearsal
- Thursday 16th December – AGM, and Company rehearsal
- Tuesday 4th January – Principal Audition Practise (including revising the audition movement for principals, and those who wish to do more challenging dancing)
- Thursday 6th January – Company rehearsal, and reserve Audition Date
- Sunday 9th January – Auditions
- Tuesday 11th January – Read-through for ALL speaking parts
- ...thereafter we're into normal Tuesday and Thursday rehearsals, with Company being primarily called on Thursdays, but also occasional Tuesdays; Principals may be called either Tuesdays and/or Thursdays, but this is all detailed on the schedule

We've tried to keep Sunday rehearsals to a reasonable level, and they'll be on the following dates. It's worth noting that the some of the biggest numbers will be set on these dates, so they are very important. Again, please put them in the diary now!

- Sunday 30th January – Set most of *Anything Goes* (the song!)
- Sunday 27th February – Set most of *Blow, Gabriel Blow*
- Sunday 20th March – 'Stagger Run'
- Sunday 10th April – PROVISIONAL rehearsal, may not be required
- Sunday 8th May - Run

Note: we've avoided Mothering Sunday, Easter Sunday and half-term!

Finally

Anything Goes is one of the funniest, brightest and most enjoyable shows ever written. We really want it to be the same for the company, and hope that as many of you as possible will want to be part of the production. Look forward to seeing you on the 2nd December!