

Clarkson Music Theatre

Looking Back 2012

By: Bill Cook

60 YEARS AGO....In 1952....the Clarkson Choir presented THE MIKADO for a four- evening run at the Clarkson Community Hall. Under the tutelage of Frank Houston and featuring Margaret Lambert, Soprano and Geoffrey Hatton, Baritone as assisting artists, the forty-five member cast featured Edith (Nelson) Bradshaw as Pitti-Sing. The archivist thanks the Estate of Ms Bradshaw for all material received and encourages the generous and timely donations of any archival material from the Executive and general membership henceforth.

50 YEARS AGO...In 1962...the Christ Church Opera Group under the Production AND Direction of Frank B. Houston of Simpson Avenue United Church, Toronto (the programme continues...) presented THE GONDOLIERS for the third time in it's history. From the 25th to the 29th of September, the miniscule Christ Church Auditorium in Clarkson was transformed into a Venetian Piazzetta/Baratarian Pavilion occupied by more than nearly seventy Gondolieri and Contadine. How Mr. Houston accomplished this feat is lost in the annals of history.

40 YEARS AGO....In 1972....the Clarkson Opera Group staged Frank Loesser's GUYS AND DOLLS at Glenforest Secondary School (our first and only trip here) Artistically directed by Tom Guzman with music direction by Jack Thomson and choreography by Jan Tingle, this Runyonesque romp through the seedy city streets of New York remains the archivist's favourite show. Fifty-six members attended our first ever Annual General Meeting on June 12th as indicated by then Secretary Eleanor Crisell's impeccable penmanship, and a \$2 membership fee was instituted for all members From the Big Apple, we relocated, in November, to a small village in Russia known as Anatevka where a FIDDLER ON THE ROOF was playing. Margaret Campbell artistically directed while Don Musella and Jan Tingle handled the music and dance repectively at the recently constructed Cawthra Park Secondary School auditorium. Ticket prices were \$2.00 per adult which resulted in us bolstering our bank account from \$461.44 in January to over \$1500 by year end. The Executive, having suggested the name Mississauga Music Theatre to the membership, decided on Clarkson Music Theatre.

30 YEARS AGO....In 1982..... our season opened in May, with a concert at Cawthra Park Secondary School called VOICES OF SPRING. The 54 member cast sang various secular and religious numbers ranging in disparity from Hard to Be Humble and Rainbow Connection to Crown Him King of Kings and Bach's Aria. The archivist still has his original-cast cassette recording! (New millennium members ask: what's a cassette?). Our 37th Season featured a return (last visited in 1971) to OKLAHOMA (try typing those letters without singing!). Directed by Andy Platel with music direction by David Robertson (David led the singing of the National Anthem at many an Argo game) with choreography by Sheila Lake, this classic is remembered more for what transpired mid-run than anything else. "Because of his inability to perform properly in the part" our Curly was replaced by "someone within the group who had a workable knowledge of the staging and lines." Proving, once again, the mantra that the 'show must go on' Director Andy Platel filled in admirably.

20 YEARS AGO.....In 1992.....April 23, 24 and 25 to be precise, Clarkson Music Theatre presented THE BEST OF CMT, a Choral Showcase selected from shows performed from 1945 until the present. Twenty-five on stage performers followed Betty Smith's narration and Eleanor Crisell's musical direction in a Cabaret-style setting at the Port Credit Legion Hall, Branch 82. In November, CMT Inc mounted THE MIKADO (insert punchline here). This John Huston (not THAT John Huston) directed production was set in the gangland Chicago era and featured music direction from Sheridan College's resident Music Director Jean Minielly. Meadowvale Theatre was the venue of choice while the programme promotes APPLAUSE as our next Fall Show. The archivist notes that we did not perform the aforementioned then <or ever> and any info answering: Why? would be appreciated.

10 YEARS AGO....In 2002...BROADWAY HEROES & VILLAINS was performed in April by CMT at the Royal Bank Theatre in Mississauga's Living Arts Centre. Under the direction of Darryl Burton, the cast of fifty-five paid homage to 'those Broadway characters we love to love...and hate'. We returned to Meadowvale Theatre in November for a familiar G&S favourite: THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE. In the early days of the group, we performed 'Pirates' three times in a ten year period! (1946, 1950, 1956). This edition was musically directed by Ruth McDonald, artistically directed by Laurel Smith with choreography by Julie Gallie.