

# 23<sup>rd</sup>. Season 91-92 Chorus of Disapproval

CHORUS OF  
DISAPPROVAL

by  
Alan Ayckbourn

## Arts/Entertainment

### Kanata cast meets comedic challenge of play-within-a-play

By Joanne Laciura

It's a comedy. It's musical, although it's not a musical.

And it would be quite easy for an amateur theatre group doing a play about the behind-the-scenes hanky panky of an amateur theatre group to make a disaster of it.

But Kanata Theatre passes the test in this lively production of Alan Ayckbourn's *Chorus of Disapproval*, a play about shy widower Guy Jones, who joins a production of John Galsworthy's 19th century musical satire *Beggar's Opera*, a musical comedy which explores the moral

#### Theatre review

*Chorus of Disapproval*  
Kanata Theatre, Earl of March High School  
Friday, Saturday at 8 p.m.

depravity of that time. As a new member of the cast, Jones soon finds himself embroiled in some modern dalliances and pressed to become an unwilling accomplice in a shady land deal.

Jones becomes involved with Hannah Llewellyn, the neglected wife of the musical company's bombastic Welsh director, Dafydd ap Ieawellyn, then quickly falls into a misalliance with the sexually voracious

wife of fellow cast member Ian Hubbard. As Jones acquires new lovers, the production of *Beggar's Opera* starts to unravel, and Jones also acquires new roles, eventually working his way from minor player to the leading role.

The format of a play-within-a-play offers obvious difficulties, beyond even the tangles and snarls created by plot complexities. There's also the problem of gracefully transposing snippets of *Beggar's Opera* against the action of the play.

*Chorus of Disapproval* is a challenge that requires a subtle

touch as well as a graceful one. Director Gwyn Knight deftly re-creates the urge to bludgeon the audience with the parallels between the characters of *Beggar's Opera* and their modern counterparts.

Although this isn't a musical, Kanata Theatre handles the musical bridges between *Beggar's Opera* and its modern counterpart with the traditions are as even.

The audience spends much of the first half hour of the play going backwards and forwards in time and disentangling the characters and their relationships. Part of the

fault may lie with some of the cast, who seem luke-warm about their characters before they gain enough confidence.

The play fails to gain momentum until the latter part of the first act, but it warms up rapidly. There are several memorable scenes, including one in which Lionel King as Jones tries out several sassy exaggerated mannerisms for his portrayal of *Beggar's Opera* highwayman Fitch.

Probably one of the best scenes is when the innocent Jones joins cast members Fay and Ian Hubbard and ends up in an evening of partner swapping. The unwitting

Jones arrives, quizzically admires the couples suggestive livingroom art and waits for his elderly date.

The tearoom scene, in which Heather Moses as Hannah Llewellyn and Annmarie Cople as Fay Hubbard engage in a tug-of-war over a pair of Jones's pastel boxer shorts is another comedic highlight. King shows a real command of the range of his character as he slides from clumsy underdog to smooth lover without losing his sense of befuddlement.

Also notable is Brooke Keneford in the role of Dafydd Llewellyn, whose thundering assurance crumbles along with his production.

### Great performances behind the scenes by Kanata Theatre crews

By Monica Hollands

When an audience views a play, it may not often realize the incredible amount of work, organization and creativity that goes into making the production a success.

Kanata Theatre's *A Chorus of Disapproval* fills all the required elements. The play is particularly challenging because it is a play within a play (a local amateur operatic society is putting on a production of *The Beggar's Opera*).

Joan Ritchie is the producer for the play. She is in charge of coordinating the very large crew and making sure everything runs smoothly.

Peter Jefferson has designed an extremely clever yet technically complicated set. There are four moveable platforms, with 14 set changes.

Costume coordinators Barbara McLaughlin and Isobel Jones both agree that working with the play's two very diverse time periods (1732 and the present), as well as the very large cast, requires a lot of work and research.

Bill Williams is once again filling the role of lighting director. He feels that due



Brooke Keneford, as Dafydd ap Ieawellyn, tries to get members of his choral society, PALOS, to give him their best. *A Chorus of Disapproval* runs Oct. 23-26 in the Earl of March Theatre.

to the many scene changes, the lighting effects are the most complex since the production of *A Nightingale Sang*.

Producer Joan Ritchie is also responsible for furnishings. A challenge was an 'interesting' sculpture and paintings required for the play. Kanata Theatre has commissioned an Ottawa sculptor, Roy Folks, to create a suitable piece. The vast assortment of props are in the capable hands of Elsie Bryant and Joan Mc-

Laughlin.

Rosemary Scott is the sound technician. Rosemary Keneford and Ann Williams are in charge of continuity. Jenny Haynes is taking care of makeup.

Keeping things running smoothly behind the scenes is Anne Holland as stage manager, with Eufon Williams as her assistant.

Special musical direction for the cast is being provided by Ron Maslin with Margri Castel assisting. Dance coaching and choreography

is being done by Linda Jamieson.

These and many more unnamed crew members are involved in this technically challenging play. Gwyn Knight is directing this comedy. Sheryne Lalonde is the assistant to the director.

*A Chorus of Disapproval* runs Wednesday, Oct. 23 through Saturday, Oct. 26 in the Earl of March Theatre. Curtain time is 8 p.m. sharp. Please contact the box office at 592-1715 for tickets.

## Arts and entertainment



Some members of the cast rehearse for the upcoming presentation of Kanata Theatre's presentation of *A Chorus of Disapproval* Oct. 23-26.





























