

Great start to group's 90th anniversary celebrations

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF,
Chelmsford Amateur Operatic
and Dramatic Society, at the
Civic Theatre FEB 2010

IT'S nearly half a century since this ethnic cleansing musical started its record Broadway run and nearly 40 years since Ray Jeffery directed the first of his 46 Fiddlers.

For Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic's 90th anniversary he's returned to the show, using the expanse of the Civic stage, with just a toy-town Anatevka in the background, for a production that looked as wonderful as it sounded.

From tradition to the final diaspora, the slightly dated show gave us a series of stage pictures, notably the candle-lit Caravaggio of the Sabbath Prayer.

Stuart Woolner's debut as musical director for the group produced some impressive choral singing, supported by a

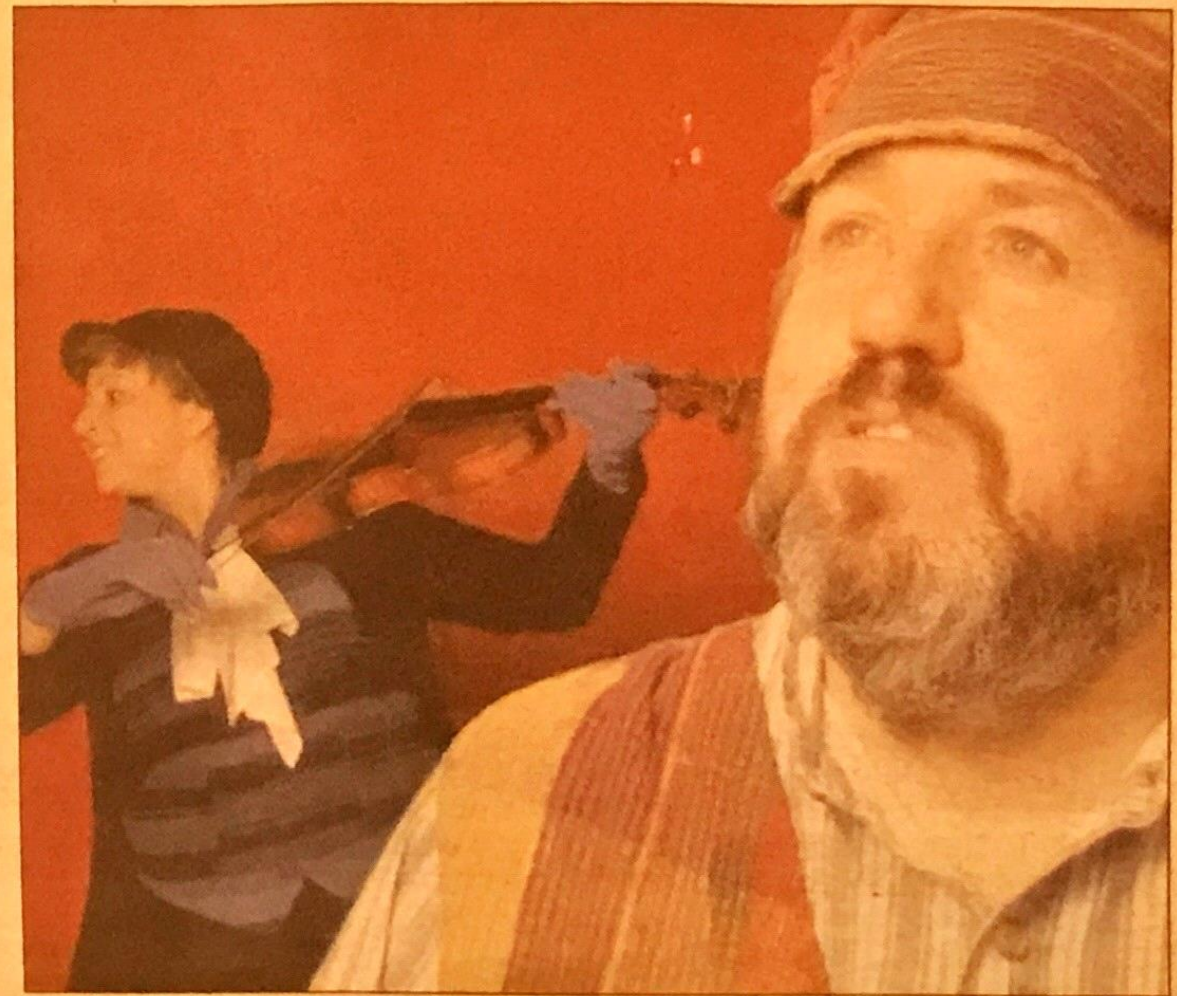
fine band, starring fiddle, accordion and klezmer clarinet.

A huge cast included veterans and youngsters – Tevye's sweet-voiced daughters were brilliant in Matchmaker. Yente herself was played with great strength of character by Angela Broad, and I liked Sean Quigley as Perchick, the radical who thinks girls are people too.

Daryl Kane was a warm, expansive Tevye with a voice to match, his long-suffering wife Golde, Lynette Sullivan. And the nimble Fiddler was Siemona Kingsley.

I could easily mention dozens more – faces who fitted the period and the places, telling cameos, strong characters – but this was very much a company piece, with the group at the top of their game.

Celebrations continue in September with *Beauty and the Beast*.



MICHAEL GRAY

Fiddler on the Roof