

Hello Dolly

—hit with

the pro touch

WELL, Hello Dolly! You're quite a hit in Ray Jeffrey's splendiferous production for the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society at Chelmsford's Civic Theatre all this week.

The musical itself, based on Thornton Wilder's play *The Matchmaker*, is uneven in quality and tails off rather, but our interest is always kept alive by the sheer polish of Mr Geoffrey's finished product and his never ending supply of inventive purposeful movements and dance routines.

Big production numbers like *Put On Your Sunday Clothes*, and the train departure scene in act one and the waiters' gallop in act two are put over with such verve and precision that they are most exciting to watch.

As Mrs Dolly Levi Betty Worrall delights the ear and eye; her singing voice is not of the strongest, it is her personality that gives to her performance its strength and charm.

Playing opposite her as Horace Vandergelder, the rich, stupid, pompous Yonkers store owner, Stan Parsons gives yet another of his finely detailed character studies, moving to meet his eventual destiny (Dolly of course) with gradually decreasing resistance.

TOUCH

Diane Watson makes Irene Molloy a delightful woman and she brings an affecting touch of wistfulness to her one big number, *Ribbons Down My Back*, her performance being beautifully complimented by that of Angela Jenner as the good-natured, simple, man-conscious Minnie Fay.

The roles of Mr Vandergelder's apprentices, Cornelius Hackel and Barnaby Tucker are but pale shadows of their equivalents in the straight play, but Russ Watson and Peter Smith do everything they can to make the characters come alive.

It is true there were one or two awkward moments on Monday night especially for the musical director, Robert Ladkin, but I am positive they will have been put right by the time this notice appears in print.

But what is really more important is that all the solo performances I mentioned (several I have not had the space to mention) paid greater attention to detail than their

creators have displayed in their earlier stage appearances.

No one could say of this show that it is anything but thoroughly professional in conception and execution.

Well he

I WAS greatly entertained at the Civic Theatre on Monday night.

Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society's latest production "*Hello Dolly!*" opened to a full house. If there are any tickets left by the time you read this then grab them. It is a pacy, racy, humdinger of a show which never seems to pause for breath. There are some super performances and terrific costumes which all add up to a colourful exciting show not to be missed if you can help it.

Yes, the orchestra could have done with another six months rehearsals and the

