

1999

Lusty tale of those brides and brother

SEVEN Brides for Seven Brothers is a musical tailor-made for the spring and proved to be a fine vehicle for director Ray Jeffery to create some of his thrilling dance routines at the Chelmsford Civic Theatre last week.

Dancers of the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society excelled themselves in the routines that suggested the violence of society in Oregon in the 1980 century, the physical horseplay and blunt courtship of the ladies whose place was definitely in the kitchen or in being bedded by their lusty husbands.

The storyline may be predictable, but it allowed some powerful dramatic performances as well as full bloodied singing with Barry Hester as Adam, the eldest of the brothers, who believed that proposing and marriage was something that should be accomplished in well under the hour, giving a performance of brute strength mixed with rough-hewn charm.

As his wife Milly, Liz Shaw tamed him (and his brothers) bringing a degree of civilisation to their ramshackle hut in the back of beyond with quiet conviction.

The other six brothers - Daniel

Hyman, Kevin Abrey, Chris Clements, Jonathan Davis, Nick Court and Stewart Charlesworth - formed a fine ensemble each one of their performances gaining by the teamwork of the others with Daniel most effective in his strong confrontation with Adam, and Stewart giving a fast-moving performance as the volatile, virile Frank.

But if anything the brides - Rebecca Scott, Claire Connor, Claire Hester, Alison Wilton, Christine Booth and Lisa Allen - were an even finer ensemble as they teased and finally succumbed to the advances of the brothers.

CAMEO

Peter Smith gave a delightful cameo of the parson called upon to perform multi-marriages while the suitors - Brendan Sadler David Smith, Graham Baguley, Gareth Buxton, Warren Jennings and Charlie Cartwright - were suitable menacing.

Musical director Andrew Denyer, for the most part, achieved a fine balance between voices and band, the costumes were stunning and the warmest of congratulations to dance captain Di Baker, associate musical director Patrick Tucker and all the unsung heroes and heroines backstage.