

TITANIC ~ THE MUSICAL

Contributed by Dean Beedell (webmaster)

16th ~ 22nd November.

Directed by Julia Rymer.

Story & Book by Lyrics & Music by

Peter Stone Maury Yeston

The cast and backstage crew celebrated in the Green Room after the final sinking. The party ended sometime after 3.00 am!

A fitting end to this happy and successful show - one of the biggest we have ever staged. And a very big 'thank you' to all those who helped make it so - especially, of course, Director Julia Rymer, who put in extraordinary efforts - and Musical Director Tim Cumper; Choreographer David Parsonson and Stage Manager Cliff Colbourne.

And an acknowledgement too, to Sinodun Players, for the loan of their Rod Paddock, who very successfully took the part of card-sharp Jay Yates just 10 days before the maiden voyage!

The sinking of the Titanic in the early hours of April 15th 1912 remains the quintessential disaster of the Century. A total number of 1,517 souls, men women and children, lost their lives, with just 711 surviving the horror of that fateful night. The fact that the world's finest, largest, strongest ship "the largest moving object on earth", infact called the "unsinkable" ship should be lost during its maiden voyage, is so incredible that, had it not actually happened, no author would have dared to contrive it.

The catastrophe had social ramifications that went far beyond the

night's events. The accommodation of the ship, divided into 1st, 2nd and 3rd Classes, mirrored almost exactly the class structure, (Upper, Middle and lower) of the English speaking world. But when the wide discrepancy between the number of survivors from each of the ship's classes was revealed - all but two of the women in 1st class were saved, with only 155 women and children from 2nd and 3rd class when all the rest drowned - there was a new, long-overdue scrutiny of the social system and its values. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the 19th Century, with its social strictures, its extravagant codes of honour and sacrifice, ended that night.

The Musical play Titanic examines the causes, conditions and characters involved in this ever-fascinating drama. This is the factual story of the fateful voyage, her officers, crew and passengers. But as has happened so many times before, the ship will not merely serve as a backdrop against which fictional, melodramatic narratives are recounted. The central character of this production is Titanic herself.

There were many blunders that contributed to the destruction of the Titanic, including the lack of lifeboats - There were only 22 and there should have been 54 - in order to make more room for the first class passengers on deck. The fact that designer Thomas Andrews - no doubt influenced by the owner of the White Star Line, Bruce Ismay, had only extended the watertight bulkheads as far as C deck, once again to provide roomier accommodation for the privileged upper classes.

At 11.40 on Sunday April 14th, the sea was calm the night moonless, the water and air both near freezing, the lookout spotted a massive iceberg, too late, the binoculars were missing from the crow's nest - another blunder. The crew tried desperately to turn the ship to evade the iceberg, but she reacted a little too slowly and scraped the side of the berg beneath the waterline, slicing her open like a tin of sardines, breaching six of her watertight compartments. From that moment, the ship was doomed. It was only a matter of two and a half hours - in fact, from the time the overture starts, to the end of this production, is the length of time it took for the legend to slip beneath the water. When the end came, the stern of the ship rose to a height of two hundred feet, twenty stories above the ocean's surface, she stood that way for a brief few moments, on end, almost perpendicular, with over a thousand screaming people clinging desperately to her lunging rails, then she plunged straight down. In a matter of seconds, the largest moving object on earth had disappeared.

This moving, yet uplifting musical play takes the real characters with their hopes and aspirations and brings them to life once again through Maury Yeston's remarkable score. It is a true celebration of this remarkable ship, the ship of dreams, Titanic

Julia.

