

# Well received

CAODS Showboat at  
Civic Theatre

SHOWBOAT, that Grand-ame of musicals, was well received by an appreciative audience on opening night. This was, of course, another CAODS spectacular. Dazzling dresses, smiles and a host of 'sentimental songs' just about cobbled together the thinnest of plots.

Christine Nicol, as Magnolia Hawks, the showboat singer who has a rough time married to a gambling man, sang beautifully and her acting lent credibility to the story. The women were good altogether; Dawn Sampson was a delightful Julie whose swansong "Bill" was one of the rare moments of the evening, and Rachel Parsons was a gusty Ellie, full of confidence and verve.

Of the men, Robin Sampson as Joe, mesmerised the audience with the nostalgic Old Man River. Peter

Smith's Cap'n Andy Hawks managed to wrest a few laughs from a script which is a bit short on humour.

And the chorus? . . . Well it is a Ray Jeffery production so of course they were good. The musical is full of showbiz clichés, but that is the nature of the beast.

Brian Cass, the Musical Director and Conductor led an able orchestra from the pit with no teething problems.

His instrumentalists played those ancient hits Why Do I Love You?, Can't Help Lovin' that Man of Mine and After the Ball, with as much freshness as if they had been composed yesterday.

The rather mature audience seemed to love it all. It runs until Saturday, April 4, with a matinee. If you want to escape from blood, guts and violence on the box, you could do a great deal worse!

Jackie Horne.