



Schoolgirl star, Margaret Oddy (Maria) and Stan Parsons (Tony) the two leading players in "West Side Story," by Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.

Chelmsford Amateurs Score In 'West Side Story'

WEST SIDE STORY is one of the most ambitious productions ever staged by the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, and it promises to be one of the most successful, judging by the reception it had from large audiences at the opening performance at the Regent Theatre on Monday and again last night.

A musical based on Romeo and Juliet in the modern setting of New York's West Side, this colourful story of rival gangs presents a challenge to amateur societies. These Chelmsford enthusiasts met it with gusto, and gave a spirited, sparkling performance.

TWO FINE LEADS

They are fortunate in being able to rely on two such pleasant voices as those possessed by 18-year-old Margaret Oddy, a Chelmsford High School sixth-former, and Sam Parsons, who played the leading parts of Maria and Tony. The latter has played many supporting roles in previous productions of the Society, but this was the first time he had "topped the bill."

He and his leading lady scored a big success right through the production, and in particular with the melodious "Tonight" song in the balcony scene.

The singing of the dainty "I feel pretty" by Maria was another popular number.

LIMITED STAGE

Janice Hall, as Anita, played a leading part with competence and charm; and good performances also came from George Bruce and John Daldry (the two leaders) and other members of the rival gangs, notably Derek Fisher as Action, one of the Jets.

Phyl Payne, in her eleventh production for the Society, had contrived to make a limited stage appear not too overcrowded even when it was occupied by the whole of the cast, numbering nearly fifty, and the dance scenes, with the vivid colouring of the dresses, produced a kaleidoscope effect. The gang fights were realistically staged.

The humorous side of the musical was well sustained, and the Jets' song, "Gee, Officer Krupke," was a big hit.

The orchestra, directed by J. Armistage Fuggle, had a share in the success of the production, which is being continued throughout the week.

