

**DRAFT REPORT FOR THE MARCH 2001 EASTERN NEWS
PERFORMANCE OF 27TH OCTOBER 2000**

WITHAM A.O.S. - THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

On the face of it a most unlikely tale for a musical, and probably more comfortably acceptable in its style language and political overtones to its place of origin, rather than to the Public Hall in Witham, this production was nevertheless highly enjoyable, with some excellent individual performances and production numbers. Using a basic permanent set with insets and imaginative use of lighting, director Val Massey made the most of the space available to create the atmosphere needed. The show's many character roles gave plenty of opportunities and these were well taken. Sue Cawley was excellent as Mona, with great style and presence. Kathryn Adkins and her daughter Victoria gave us good characterisations of Angel and Shy respectively and Liz Watson was just right as Jewel, Mona's assistant. Michael Dunion had a hypocritical ball as the self-righteous, over the top, Melvin P. Thorpe, and Pat Briggs, as Doatsey May reflected with good effect on what might have been. Inevitably the 'mess' which everyone had lived with until Melvin P. Thorpe made it uncomfortably public, had to be resolved in order to assuage the involvement of Senator, Governor and Mayor, and the Sheriff, himself involved with Mona, drew the short straw. Stewart Adkins initial characterisation of the Sheriff, as very strong and certain, did not quite seem to match with the uncertainties about what to do later on, and his forgetfulness of special times with Mona.

With choreography by Nikki Mundell-Poole all the production numbers came across with verve and character, though the early 'explanation' sequences did seem to be rather overlong. The Girls came across as individuals and looked as good as they should! Costume was well thought out and the sound balance between stage and pit was fine, with a well-maintained Country and Western style.

A good production this, which was much enjoyed by the audience. Congratulations to all concerned

Other Comments (for the Society only)

1. There's little to add to the report above, except to say thanks for a well-laid out programme with lots of information. One point you might wish to note is that the NODA Logo now to be used by all affiliated Societies is the one formerly reserved for Societies over 100 years old, i.e. the one containing both laurel wreath and crown. See page 15 of NODA News Vol. 58 No.4 Autumn edition.

John Warburton
November 2000