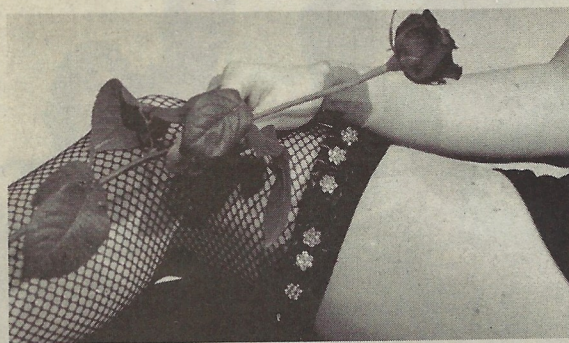


Award-winning musical

NEXT week, from Saturday October 20th to Saturday October 20th Teddington Theatre Club presents *Gypsy* directed by Angela Jenkins.

By the time Gypsy Rose Lee became a 1930s burlesque headliner, she had come a long way up from vaudeville and out from her younger sister's shadow. But she could never leave behind one force of nature: the unstoppable ambition of her mother, the woman who thrust her into the spotlight.

The story follows the adventures of Madame 'Mama' Rose who, like a gypsy, travels the length and breadth of America's theatre in search of successful theatre careers for her daughters. While June is talented, Louise is not, and times are hard with the death of vaudeville. But Mama Rose never gives up - even when her agent/suitor Herbie begs her to stop when June leaves the act.



A touch of the burlesque.

With Louise as the star, the act hits rock bottom and is forced to play burlesque - a blessing in disguise as Louise steps into the world as Gypsy Rose Lee.

Written for Ethel Merman, other Mama Roses include Rosalind Russell, Angela Lansbury and Bette Midler. Songs include 'Some People', 'Small World', 'Everything's Coming Up Roses' and 'Together Wherever We Go'.

Angela Jenkins's production for TTC stars Angela Sturgeon as Mama Rose with Charles A Halford as her suitor Herbie. Swan Award Winning Fay Brown plays 'Dainty' June and Karen Swift as the daughter Louise who eventually becomes Gypsy Rose Lee. This powerful, award-winning musical is her story, based on 'The Memoirs of Gypsy Rose Lee'.

LK

GYPHY
2001

Catch this if you can



Sam Marks as Yonkers, Karen Swift as Louise, Greg Evans as LA, Ed Latham as Angie, Fay Brown as June and in the front, Adam Millard as Tulsa - in Gypsy, a Teddington Theatre Club.

STAGING *Gypsy* in Hampton Hill Playhouse was a happy decision. Stripped of big movie production values for the 197-seater auditorium, Arthur Laurents's play was revealed principally as a heartfelt story - with music.

The ensemble playing and cast's understanding of the complexities of the central family, based on the real life Gypsy Rose Lee, further illuminated the music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

The love between Rose and her brood is tangible. But the ache she harbours for her feckless mother has transmogrified into a driving force that propels daughters Babies June and Louise on to the 1920s Vaudeville stage, dragging besotted agent Herbie in

Rose's hyperactive wake.

Each role is a gift and the 23 performers took their opportunities by the throat with the help of Angela Jenkins's direction, music conducted by Simon Lane and choreography by Liz Field.

Just a few long scene changes threatened the pace.

Angela Sturgeon's Rose, tight, disciplined, was a tour de force, skewing every setback to advantage, insisting that 'Everything's Coming Up Roses'.

As her two girls, Fay Brown was overblown Dainty June, frozen in ringlets and testing the stage with her high kicks. This is the same actress as the award-winning Miss Adelaide of *TOPS Guys and Dolls*. What versatility.

By contrast, luminous Karen Swift as the clumsy elder sister Louise who evolved into the world-renowned stripper,

possessed an almost ethereal quality at times.

Charles A Halford, achieved the difficult feat of quiet stage presence. Of course, he will crack and leave Rose before she drags him under, but first there is a fine scene when he blasts the Burlesque theatre stage manager Pастey (Sam Marks) for not treating her as a lady.

Cameo roles stay in the mind, such as Mandy Stenhouse as the producer's acid-tongued secretary, while the younger performers displayed awesome virtuosity.

Finally, a huge smile for 'You Gotta Get a Gimmick', bumped, flashed and ground by glorious strippers, Carolyn Williams, Romany Savident and Mandy Stenhouse.

The run ends on Saturday. Catch it if you can.

Gail Hébert