

Society commended for legs and voices

Review

From Hair to Eternity,
East Herts Operatic
Society,

Victoria Hall Theatre,
Old Harlow,
Thu Apr 8-Sat Apr 10

This was a step into the unknown with a musical compiled and directed by society member Russell Muir.

It was designed as a vehicle for the performance of a succession of hits from the sixties, 29 in all. This set its own problem of how to link them with some kind of storyline, and the solution chosen was to set the story in a hairdressing salon where the girls could moon about the songs' main theme – lurve.

Helen Fruin did sterling work as Carol, the manageress and principal lovesick one, but the



HAIR RAISING: The cast of *From Hair to Eternity*

girly chat about boys and still more boys was a bit thin. Things livened up when a male actually appeared in the shape of comedic postman Jimmy Mack (Phil Watkins), and all the swooning made sense when plumber and romantic lead Johnny Angel (Josh Borley) came in to unblock the basin and stimulate the flow of blood to Carol's head. Johnny's Brylcreem quaff was a ladykiller.

The young men had more convincing dialogue, and their joint effort with *The Young Ones* went well. The high spot was reached when the drab figure of the tea lady, Mrs Brown (Cheryl Barrett), suddenly shed her head scarf and overall to reveal flowing black locks and a voluptuous red dress, and to deliver a magnificent version of *Hey, Big Spender* while vamping a cowering Jimmy Mack. Pace generally was crisper in this act.

The costuming of the production was excellent, the girls in mini-dresses true to the period in simple bold patterns of strong colour. This gave a possibility for effective groupings in the choreography (Rhonda Tipple); voices and legs in EHOS both very commendable. The set, in attempting to be jazzy and with it, tended to clash with the balletic costumes and their patterns unfortunately.

Richard Henderson



Stunning Russian orthodox pieces

A wonderful evening of Russian music was delivered by four singers, ranging from high alto to basso profundo (a sound seldom heard in western Europe), who came from The Hermitage Ensemble of St Petersburg and are presently on a tour of the country.

The first part of the evening comprised sacred music, much of which was suppressed during the many years of the communist era, and it truly came to life.

The second half was made up of folk music, some old, some more modern, but again all beautifully sung.

Howard Guard, the owner of this most beautiful church, said after the performance: "The Russian orthodox pieces were utterly stunning and the church

Review

Hermitage Ensemble
quartet,

**St Nicholas's Church,
Great Munden,
Thursday April 8**

of St Nicholas, built in 1120, responded with its full vigour, as did the 140 supporters who filled the building. The atmosphere was electric.

"I am enormously grateful to the small committee for making such an important contribution to St. Nicholas's well-being."

As the result of donations made in connection with the evening, a similar sum of money is being sent to the charity Help for Heroes.

Christopher Melluish