

'Brothel' complaints are dismissed

BURTON'S biggest school has defended its decision to allow a musical which deals with the racy subject of prostitution to be performed in its auditorium.

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, set in an American brothel, is being staged by Burton and District Operatic Society at de Ferrers Academy, in Horninglow, throughout this week.

Several readers had contacted the Mail to complain about the decision to stage the production at a school, saying the venue was inappropriate given the play's subject matter.

Others also raised concerns over posters being used to advertise the show featuring a scantily clad woman.

However, the school said that the play's show times were restricted to half-term week, when no children would be on site.

■ **Dave Stacey's review of the production is featured on Page 12.**

The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas by Burton Operatic Society

SAUCY as a seaside postcard — but no naughtier! That must be the verdict on *The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas*, being presented this week by Burton and District Operatic society at de Ferrers Academy, Horninglow.

Yes, the title may sound a wee bit wicked but don't worry — in the tradition of many storybooks, the ladies of the oldest profession have hearts of gold, as one might expect in a show full of lively and sometimes heart-warming tunes.

Led by Karen Hambleton as Miss Mona, who is in charge of this money-spinning establishment (the existence of which has been an open secret for more than a century) the ladies open the show with song after song after song, just to get everybody in happy mood. Then disaster strikes. A fame-seeking TV reporter played by Paul Arnold sees the chance to organise a crusade to close down what he regards as a den of iniquity, even though many people regard it as an asset to the community. Thus he splits the local electorate in two, and that has dodgy politicians dithering while they make up their minds which way to jump.

Andy Hambleton as a sheriff who, for a small consideration, turns a blind eye to the whorehouse, foolishly berates the do-gooder telly-man with curses and gunshots, not realising he is on camera. His unintended TV appearance means their battle is lost and he has to close the whorehouse, in spite of his fond feelings for Miss Mona.

Andy plays his role superbly and the singing of both Hambletons is great. Also outstanding is a charming number, *Twenty-four Hours of Lovin'*, sung by Sharon Plummer. There is a tremendous song and dance routine by a group portraying a



OLDEST PROFESSION . . . cast members (front, from left) Karen Hambleton, Lauren Sewell, Rachel Cooke (back) Fiona Wright, Andy Lathbury and Sam Walker.

football team and other ensemble numbers. Steve Foster directs and also makes a token appearance in one of the early group songs.

Others responsible for a good show are Mike Mear, producer, Michaela Wilson, choreographer, and David Blackwell,

musical director.

The opening night audience was a bit thin, presumably because some who might have attended chose romantic St Valentine's Night dinners. The show continues nightly until Saturday with a Saturday afternoon matinee.