

A GANNETT NEWS
CCM

BY JAMES L. GELFAND
 The Cincinnati Enquirer
 Benjamin Britten's chamber op-
 eras "Albert Herring" may not be as
 familiar to American audiences as
 "Peter Grimes" and "The Young
 Person's Symphony," but it
 strikes a chord close to human
 nature.
 Director Jonathan Eaton has
 succeeded in leading the human
 side to this light-hearted parody.
 Presented in Patricia Corbett The-
 atre at the University of Cincinnati
 last week, the work is a gem of music
 with an opera plot makes fun at
 small town musical hypocrisy. The

dom-
 tions.
 than. Lu-
 pleatry of im-
 present church,
 Mr. Eaton kept it kee-
 and, believe it or
 tly interesting. Yet it
 tract from Britten's womanly
 score. Best of all in this ensemble
 opera, the cast was quite natural

THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

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FIVES 'Albert Herring' balance, believably

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 CERA REVIEW

allowing its stock charac-
 to become
 vicar, pubec-
 There was
 evidenced by
 and the 300
 on, but
 advanced by
 was
 in-
 together and singing was first-rate.
 Tom (André) and imaginative light-
 ing (C. L. Cowell) indicated the
 Victorian heaviness of the furnish-
 ings, costumes (by J. L. Tyler
 Storm) and somewhat dated story
 line. As it goes, the small town of
 Loxford is seeking a May Queen,
 announced by following the town
 signs, with the committee, seven
 come up with a substitute in time
 coming girl, so Isaacson (Harrison
 Herring) proposes a May Day King
 Albert Herring, who is "a bit

simple" and lives with his mother
 among the cast. Assistant conduc-
 tor Kenneth Woods, who was alert,
 efficient and confidently stayed with
 the singers unflinchingly and only
 sometimes overpowered. (Woodward
 summed up the other per-
 formances.)
 The 13 piece orchestra created
 a sense of atmosphere between
 scene changes — such as the love
 duet and from "Jargon and Jor-
 dan" that could be heard while Albert
 drank his tin-bird lemonade.
 The singers ranged from excep-

tional to good with the women
 tending to push the sound in upper
 registers. In the title role, Gary
 Seydel captured Albert Herring's
 wide range of emotions in Act 2
 expertly — from insecurity to the
 slow realization that he had been
 manipulated. Her substitute in the
 equally, the soprano, Scott
 Gregory, who as Sid, stood out for
 neatness of vocal projection and
 smoothness of vocal presence.
 His duets with Nancy (soprano)
 sung by Elizabeth Saunders) abso-
 lutely stole. Robert Ayres was a
 smoothly focused stand-in as the
 vicar. Philip Horst was a bustling

basso as the police superintendent
 and Chris Higgins (the mayor) in
 played an expressive tone in
 one would have liked to hear in
 from.
 Mrs. Harrison hammed it up
 Lady Hillocks and projected a for-
 titude, some times scintillant, vo-
 through her tasing vocal role.
 Other strong contributions were
 made by Jeanette Graydon, as
 prim and proper housekeeper, as
 53. Her part, as the excited
 Schoonhamer and Laura Backley,
 Mrs. Herring.

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