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NODA SCOTLAND

Magazine

National Operatic and Dramatic Association
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COUNCILLOR'S WELCOME



Welcome to the second edition of our new electronic magazine. The feedback on the first edition was very positive and the NODA Scotland Committee would ask that you please share this edition with all your members to ensure they all have the chance to keep up to date with all that is going on within NODA in Scotland and beyond.

The NODA website provides an ideal place for you to promote your upcoming productions. These can be listed, for free, as far in advance as you have made plans. If you need help to do this please do not hesitate to contact myself or call the NODA head office (01733 374790).

Your own club website and Facebook page can help to attract new members, promote your productions or allow you to sell tickets online. Please ensure these are kept up to date to gain the maximum benefit from these valuable marketing tools. A number of websites I have looked at recently have been considerably out of date.

The NODA Scotland Committee and our Youth Adviser Calum Campbell have been working hard to plan a series of youth workshops – *Dare to Dream*. If you have members who would be interested in taking part in these, please contact your Regional Representative who can provide further details.

It is important that all member clubs have suitable insurance in place. It is important to review the level of cover you have on a regular basis to ensure you have adequate protection.

Over the past few months you will all have been aware of new legislation covering the storage and use of personal data (GDPR). To ensure you are complying with your obligations NODA has produced a very helpful fact sheet which can be downloaded from the website. If you have any additional questions please contact Dale Freeman (NODA COO) – dale@noda.org.uk

Full details for the upcoming NODA Scotland Golf Competition and Annual Conference can be found elsewhere in the Magazine. It would be great to see increased support for both these events this year.

As I complete my first year as NODA Scotland Councillor, can I thank you, the members, for all the help and support as well as the many invites to see a wide variety of excellent productions all over Scotland? I would also like to thank my hard-working committee for all they do to help support amateur theatre in Scotland. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you need any help, support or advice.

I wish you all an enjoyable summer and I look forward to meeting up with members over the coming months at NODA events or your next production.

Stuart McCue-Dick, NODA Scotland Councillor

NODA SCOTLAND MAGAZINE

NODA Scotland Magazine is published in March, July and November. The March edition includes reviews on shows which had performances in November, December, January and February; the July edition covers shows performed in March, April, May and June; and reviews of shows performed in July, August, September and October appear in the November edition.

Generally, reviews are written by the Regional Representatives whose names appear later on this page. Where the review has not been written by the appropriate Regional Representative, the author's name is given.

Advertisements are invited from societies and theatrical rights holders, traders and suppliers.

Advertising rates

- The rate for a show advertisement is £25 per edition.
- The rate for advertisements by theatrical rights holders, traders and suppliers is £50 for three editions.

Please send advertising material to the Editor.

All copy for the November edition of the *NODA Scotland Magazine* should be with the Editor not later than **Wednesday 31 October 2018**. Earlier receipt of material will be welcome.

NODA SCOTLAND COMMITTEE

Generic e-mail address: firstname.secondname@noda.org.uk

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NODA TODAY

NODA Today is a UK-wide magazine published in April, August and November.

The content of the magazine comprises features about societies, individuals, shows, NODA corporate activities and any outstanding achievements or activities in the region. NODA Head Office has asked that Regional Editors provide no more than 1,200 words collectively for all of the region's content. All jpeg pictures sent for inclusion should be at least 150dpi, with the ideal being 300dpi. Articles for the November 2018 edition are welcomed from societies and individual members and should be submitted by e-mail to the Regional Editor by **Monday 17 September 2018**.

Note to Secretaries:

Please send a copy of the *NODA Scotland Magazine* to all members of your society to ensure that everyone is up to date.

A KIRKCALDY CELEBRATION – TOM WRIGHT



Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society (KAOS) recently held a Celebration to recognise the tremendous commitment given by Tom Wright to the Society. The event was attended by members, orchestra players, back stage personnel along with directors and choreographers with whom Tom had worked.

Tom first came to KAOS as accompanist for the 1973 production, *Fiddler on the Roof*. Up to this point in time Tom's main musical passion was in the world of brass bands, having played solo euphonium for the Barry Ostlere & Shepherd Band. Coincidentally the 1973 production in the newly refurbished Adam Smith Halls marked a new association with the building, first used by the Society in 1935. The following year of 1974 the Society's production was *Pink Champagne* with Tom now taking over the baton as Musical Director – the first show of 57. Tom fulfilled his role as Musical Director with diligence – attention to detail for principal singers, chorus and orchestra players alike.

Looking back however over the years the integral part Tom played in the development of KAOS becomes very evident – in fact above and beyond the normal remit of a Musical Director. In 1983 the KAOS Committee decided that they required a vehicle to showcase all the talent within the Society – not everyone can play the parts. It was decided to do a Spring Concert – nothing new in this idea you might add; however it was not promoted as a fundraiser but with emphasis on opportunity for all. Tom created a format of medleys featuring chorus work and solo singing which worked successfully to provide upbeat and fast moving sections. These sections were also used in future cabaret style performances.

Spring Concerts were superseded by the Spring Show. Tom agreed to be the MD for these shows (mainly produced every second year) and was often rehearsing two shows at the same time! KAOS is not a stranger to the idea of multiple shows, having twice produced two shows done on alternate nights, e.g. *A Country Girl* and *The Mikado* in 1927! (It probably says it all!) Tom's additional input was vital in a couple of compilation shows where his expertise was key in selecting and integrating various styles. The Society celebrated its 100 years in 2007 and one of the activities for that centenary year was to produce a CD – Tom was at the forefront of that including much of the post recording work.

Tom has been Musical Director for 58 out of the Society's 119 staged productions in its 111 years – a huge achievement of partnership with our company, directors, cast, orchestra and backstage team – essential for a successful and respected Musical Director. Congratulations, Tom!

Harry Kerr, Honorary President, Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

CELEBRATE YOUR TIME IN AMATEUR THEATRE!

How long have you been in amateur theatre?

Did you know you can purchase long service awards from NODA to celebrate your dedication?

From 10 years all the way up to 70 years, we have pins, badges and medals that you can wear with pride.

Check out our long service awards on the NODA website.

**Further details from the NODA Scotland Awards Secretary:
Gordon Smith (Regional Representative, District No 10).**

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

March to June 2018

65 Year Pin

Margaret Russell

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

60 Year Diamond Bar

James Anderson

Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company

Cynthia Dickson

Leven Amateur Musical Association

Margaret Logan

Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company

Christine Lyon

Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company

Margaret Paul

Lochgelly & District A.M.A.

Morag Wallace

Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society

Rose Young

Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society

55 Year Pin

Irene Margaret Elizabeth Cook

Rosyth & District Musical Society

Hazel Devlin

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

Audrey MacDonald

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

Robert Seaton

Carnoustie Musical Society

Eileen Taylor

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

50 Year Medal

Valarie Jane Steel Brown

Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society

Dorothy Webster

The Lyric Club

50 Year Gold Bar

Pat Adam

Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company

Rosalind Beattie

Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society

Linda Blackie

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

Kathleen Crowe

Leven Amateur Musical Association

Evelyn Grahame

Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society

Margaret Herriot

Leven Amateur Musical Association

Frances Irons

Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society

Harry Kerr

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

Linda MacDonald

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

John Urquhart

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

Elizabeth Wylie

Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society

45 Year Silver Bar

Helen Brown

Falkirk Operatic Society

Eileen Cant

Southern Light Opera Company

Jeanna Connell

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society

Aileen Dumper

Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society

Dale Henry

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

March to June 2018

45 Year Silver Bar

David Mitchinson
Janette MacDonald
Evelyn Purves
Jack Rigg
Sheena Seaton
Fiona Wilson

Carpe Diem Productions
Rosyth & District Musical Society
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association
Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Carnoustie Musical Society
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

40 Year Silver Bar

Joyce Gallacher
Barbara Hood
Jean Mitchell
Lawrence Phillips
Adrienne F Robb
Moira Robertson
Charles Small
Sheila Wilson

Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society
Selkirk Musical Theatre Company
Downfield Musical Society
Falkirk Operatic Society
Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Leven Amateur Musical Association
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

35 Year Silver Bar

Netta Brewster
Patricia Brown
Dianne Connor
Kay Dickson
Jennifer Finnie
Janine Hardie
Ian James
Gillian Maitland
Carol McGovern
John Scott

Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society
Elgin Musical Theatre
Anstruther & District Amateur Musical Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Dalziel High School FP Easter Egg Club
Markinch Amateur Operatic Society
Carluke Amateur Operatic Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Southern Light Opera Company
Leven Amateur Musical Association

35 Year Badge

Gordon Wood

Cupar Amateur Musical Society

30 Year Silver Bar

Stewart Borthwick
Chris Brooks
Cathy Endeacott
Janette Leask
Cameron Lowe
Rose McCann
Carol McGovern
Anna McKinnon
Sandra Oliver
Angela Pichlmayer
Gregor Small

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Falkirk Operatic Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Theatre Guild Glasgow
Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society
Southern Light Opera Company
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association
Selkirk Musical Theatre Company
Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society
Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society

30 Year Badge

Fay Caird

Cupar Amateur Musical Society

25 Year Long Service Medal

Elaine Barlow
Shirley Bean
Allan Graham
Susan James
Claire Mallinson
Margot McKay

Markinch Amateur Operatic Society
Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society
Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society
Carluke Amateur Operatic Society
Alyth Musical Society
Leven Amateur Musical Association

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

March to June 2018

25 Year Long Service Medal

Shelley McLaren
Gillian Rendle
Jo-Ann Robinson
Lucy Thomson
Nicola Watt
Audrey Westwaters

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society
Ayr Amateur Opera Company
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society
Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society
Markinch Amateur Operatic Society

25 Year Badge

Anne Anderson
Mike Driscoll
Paul Hannigan
Laura Moore
David Newton
Jane Sinclair

Elgin Musical Theatre
EROS Musical Society
EROS Musical Society
The Lyric Club
Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society
EROS Musical Society

20 Year Badge

Debbie Alexandra
Shona Clark
Kim Dickenson
Yvonne Dickson
Clark Graham
Scott Kenneway
Dan McKirgan
Kevin O'Raw
Susan Paterson
Carol Patrick
Alan Smith
Lesley Wilson
Malcolm Wilson
Leanne Young

Anstruther & District Amateur Musical Society
EROS Musical Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Edinburgh Music Theatre Company Ltd.
Callander Amateur Operatic Society
Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society
Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company
Leven Amateur Musical Association
Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society
EROS Musical Society
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society
Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society

15 Year Badge

Eleanor Love
Neil James Heath
Gillian Bruce
Susan Leask
Laura Ferguson
Alison Niven
Campbell Harris
Graham Smith
Louise Szoneberg
Zoe Spence
Michelle McCartney
Greer Robertson
Richard Tebbutt
Donna Bell
Jennifer Main

Alyth Musical Society
Ayr Amateur Opera Company
Bohemians Lyric Opera Company Edinburgh
Bohemians Lyric Opera Company Edinburgh
Brechtin Amateur Operatic Society
Brechtin Amateur Operatic Society
Elgin Musical Theatre
Elgin Musical Theatre
Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company
Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association
Thomson-Leng Musical Society
Thomson-Leng Musical Society

10 Year Badge

Emma Anderson
Patricia Archibald
Daniel Baillie
Lynda Bates
Agnieszka Becher
Amanda Blacklock
Diane Brisbane
Mike Denholm
Tony Dolan

Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company
Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Elgin Musical Theatre
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association
Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company
Falkirk Operatic Society
EROS Musical Society
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

March to June 2018

10 Year Badge

Jennifer Durie
Catharine Fletcher
Andrew Gardiner
Alistair Hill
Rachel Hogg
Andrew Jack
Chloe Kennedy
Kathryn Kitchen
Jennifer Main
Lee McHugh
Brian McKay
David Paterson
Janice Raeside
Terri Roberts
Evelyn Robertson
Denise Smith
Wendy Tulloch
Diane Woodburn

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society
Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association
Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company
Thomson-Leng Musical Society
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Thomson-Leng Musical Society
Bohemians Lyric Opera Company Edinburgh
Callander Amateur Operatic Society
Hawick A.O.S. Musical Theatre Company
EROS Musical Society
Thomson-Leng Musical Society
Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association
EROS Musical Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Ayr Amateur Opera Company

Commendation Award

David Dewar
Joan Sands

Brechin Amateur Operatic Society
Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group

A GALA ACHIEVEMENT



At the end of their March 2018 production of *Summer Holiday* in the Volunteer Hall, eleven members of Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society were presented with Long Service Awards by Borders Area Regional Representative, Debbie Lyons. The awards ranged from ten to 65 years of service – a total of 470 years! A magnificent achievement!

Evelyn Watson, Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society (photo by courtesy of Sheila Scott)

A STAGGERING TOTAL OF 390 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE AMATEUR THEATRE



After the final curtain fell on a hugely successful production of *The Wizard of Oz*, the entire cast and crew of Innerleithern & District Amateur Operatic Society gathered on stage to hear from President Nicola Watt and special guest, NODA Scotland Councillor, Stuart McCue-Dick. Nicola thanked everyone for an excellent production and invited the Councillor to hand over performance certificates to each of the children and young people taking part. The President then announced the various Long Service Awards which the Councillor presented to the following members (years of service in brackets): Zoe Spence (15), Leanne Young (20), Shirley Bean (25), Allan Graham (25), Gillian Rendle (25), Nicola Watt (25), Angela Pichlmayer (30), Greg Small (30), Adrianne Robb (40), Aileen Dumper (45), Evelyn Grahame (50), Rose Young (60).

Nicola Watt, President, Innerleithern & District Amateur Operatic Society

OBITUARY – Nighean Ure

The NODA community particularly in Fife (District No.7) was saddened by the death of Nighean Ure – an ardent supporter of amateur theatre.

Nighean's early interest and involvement in amateur theatre was with Lochgelly and District Amateur Musical Association and subsequently over the years with Leven Amateur Musical Association. It was during this time that Nighean, along with her lifetime companion Adah Parker, honed her skills in the make-up department – her expertise becoming an invaluable asset to the production teams. A primary school teacher by profession, Nighean enjoyed her summer breaks which often featured the summer season of opera in Verona. Once the word was out concerning their make-up expertise, these summer holidays were important because over the years the duo's services became sought after by many amateur theatre groups in Fife whether opera, Gilbert & Sullivan or musicals. The result of this was that during the winter/spring season they were here, there and everywhere often finishing a show one week starting another the next.

On meeting Nighean for the first time your impression would be of a very quiet, gentle lady however those of us who knew her were aware that she paid great attention to detail. Whether you thought you were able to apply your own make-up or not her watchful eye ensured that her standards were met - her unique brush (hare's foot) tackling any loose powder! Nighean did all of this with a great sense of fun and her helpful manner was ever present at all the productions in which she was involved – each society enjoying her full commitment. She led and supported make-up teams as she progressed around Fife and it can be said that her legacy lives on. Nighean – remembered with thanks!

Harry Kerr, Honorary President, Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

OBITUARY – Michael Cox

Michael Cox, Honorary President of St Andrews Amateur Musical Society (SAMS) died recently. He had been a member of SAMS for almost 70 years, and NODA for 60. He had a fine voice and played all the main bass roles in all the G&S shows and many others. He was also a fine actor, acting with the St Andrews Drama Group in the 1950s. He and his wife Sheila were regular attenders of the NODA Scotland conferences at Peebles Hydro. For many years Sheila would play the piano in the bar after the evening events and between then they would keep the singing going till the early hours. Sheila died a few years ago, but Mike kept his involvement with SAMS. He was still taking on cameo roles in musicals in his 80s. His contribution will be sorely missed. He last appeared on stage with us in *Guys and Dolls* in 2011, at the grand old age of 82! Mike is seen below in *No No Nanette* in 1974 and *Anything Goes* in 1999.

Alan Tricker, St Andrews Amateur Musical Society





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Be inspired by amateur theatre

NODA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE

26 – 28 October 2018
Peebles Hydro

Friday theme night including drinks reception (sponsored by RUG):

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER
and his musicals

AGM

Workshops – movement,
singing, drama, good to talk,
rights holder forum

Gala Dinner with guest speaker
Programme and Poster Competition

Trader stands

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Single Room.....	£286.00
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Additional Nights..... £60.50

Gala Dinner..... £54.50

Gala Dinner with bed & breakfast

Single Room.....	£120.00
Double/Twin Room (2 sharing)	£114.00

NEW FOR 2018

To help spread the cost of the weekend
NODA Scotland has opened a dedicated
bank account to allow members to save up.

For full details contact Stuart McCue-Dick
(NODA Scotland Councillor)
stuart.dick@noda.org.uk

Bookings now open. For full details – www.noda.org.uk/regions/Scotland

Note to Secretaries:

Please contact Head Office to make sure all your society's contact details are up to date.

REVIEWS
DISTRICT 1 (Glasgow Area)

The Lyric Club: Priscilla, Queen of the Desert

Director: Alan C Jones; Musical Director: David Fisher; Choreographer: Marie McElhinney

This was my third viewing of an amateur production of *Priscilla* in as many years, proving just how popular this slightly 'different' show has proved. It also confirmed my belief in the strength of Amateur Theatre, in that given the same plot, the same words spoken and sung, essentially the same set (particularly the titled cast member – the Bus!) there are differences which can be brought out maintaining interest for audiences. [The old, clichéd response from our customers of "Oh, no thanks, I saw that three years ago!" is untrue. They saw a different production of the show three years ago! Ask them the title of a favourite book – A Christmas Carol; a James Bond or Perry Mason; The Bible; Little Women; whatever – and ask how many times they have re-read it, and they might reassess the reply.] This show's main characters, Tick/Mitzi (Roy McGregor), the cross-dressing artist anxious to see his son; Adam/Felicia (Ross Adam), the very emotional one; and Bernadette (Raymond Morrison), the one who had taken the decision to go for 'the op.', portrayed the characters perfectly, the first two being more 'camp' than Raymond, whose moves showed that he must have spent much time studying females' actions, without being in the least OTT. After many years away from Glasgow, he and his wife are glad to be back, with his return to the city giving him the chance to perform again with Lyric very welcome. In the sometimes bizarre plot of this show, the three Divas (Laura Moore, Sinéad Wylie and Lisa Dutch) provided excellent musical harmony for little apparent reason, but other principals gave scope for the reactions of the residents on the journey to Alice Springs to show some favourable, many against the members of this travelling drag-show troupe. With others — estranged wife Marion (Melanie Paterson); son Benji (double cast as Finlay Thomson and Kai Kerr) who accepts his father's dual personality; Bob (David Campbell) outback mechanic whose wife Cynthia (Elaine Watt) has a different skill with ping-pong balls; Shirley (Elaine Wilkie) masculine barmaid; and Miss Understanding (John McGlone) another cross dresser making up the rest of the principals, all supported by a full ensemble of some thirty well choreographed 'unnamed principals'. The eclectic list of songs from various composers was well performed under David's direction, keeping the full audience entertained and guessing where they'd been heard before. Altogether a well-performed, fun show, giving food for thought where some of the characters were concerned, and a feather in the caps of the bizarre costumes specially prepared by June Young at That Looks Good for this club.

Pantheon Club: Into the Woods

Director: Graeme Shield; Musical Director: Andy MacDonald; Choreographer: Clare Ryan

Yet again, a 'new' show as far as I was concerned. I knew that some of Sondheim's music would be familiar, but I did not expect the 'fairytale' aspect of the plot, bringing in many well-known tales from childhood, all intermingled. A baker and his wife wishing a child, Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, lots more Grimm characters, meaning writing a review is more complicated than usual, with a vast cast filling the smallish Webster stage, and the very competent band filling the auditorium with the music. Twenty one named characters, with many of them being new to the Glasgow scene, Jack's cow playing a prominent part of the plot, which consisted in the main of saying "Be Careful what you wish for – you may get more than you thought!" Too many aspects to pick out particular people, and the whole event a *tour de force*, strengthening Pantheon's reputation in the Glasgow theatre scene. Usually, a show centres on a few main characters, but this had so many throughout the whole show that to pick out any for praise would suggest that the others were not worthy, which was most definitely not the case, so I am 'chickening out' and listing the named cast, all of whom performed well. Emma Lapointe, Marina Kelman, Dominic Spencer, Amy Quinn, Stephen Quinn, Katy Angus, Donna Walton, Stephanie Semple, Lorna Masson, Patricia Welch, Megan Brechin, Lindsay Ashforth Fraser, George Marcinkiewicz, Jane Hamilton, Gordon Downie, Chris McLeish, Rachael Adam, Ryan McMahon, Sheila Rae, Oliver Timpson and Liam McGrath. Some obviously had a greater participation than others, but all gave of their best, to the audience's pleasure. With October '18, May '19 and November '19 all booked, blockbusters all in the King's Theatre, with no doubt other smaller productions in planning, Pantheon Club is not sleeping, or even 'resting'.

Note to Marketing Managers:

You can promote your future productions with an advert in the *NODA Scotland Magazine*.

Runway Theatre Company: Betty Blue Eyes

Director: Robert Fyfe; Musical Director: David R Dunlop; Choreographer: Greg Robertson

This was a show about which I had not had any information until Runway Theatre Co announced its plan to present it. An adaptation of a story by Alan Bennett and Malcolm Mowbray suggested a fair amount of humour, and we were not disappointed. Verging on a Rix farce, it gave scope for various characterisations from this well chosen cast, with a well-crafted pretend pig skilfully handled by a cast member. Based on wartime rationing of meat, which I can just remember, and a 'jobsworth' official's pursuit of miscreants, the story kept the audience's attention, assisted by full chorus adding music, but no well-known songs. It's 1947, post-war, but still austerity. A Royal Wedding is imminent, and some Councillors (Bob McDevitt, Tom Russell and J Campbell Kerr) plan a celebration meal other than with Spam (the only potential for most people) and have hidden a pig from officialdom. Struggling Chiropodist Gilbert (Ross Nicol) hoped for a surgery on The Parade, but was bullied by local Doctor and Councillor (McDevitt) so when he found out about the hidden pig, vowed to get his own back. The 'jobsworth' Wormold, played as a semi-Nazi by Alasdair Hawthorn, suspected something and chased various people to little avail, eventually being treated for sore feet unsuccessfully. The pig (Betty Blue Eyes) was moved from here to there, creating havoc on many sides, with social climber Catherine MacKenzie, Gilbert's wife, along with ailing 'mother dear' Merlyn Soutar (another splendid characterisation) managing to hinder as much as possible. A complicated storyline, leading to many 'blind alleys', with well-played characters and an ensemble keeping the constant music going meant satisfaction for audience and, I'm sure, the cast, with this romp. As always, first-class entertainment from Runway.

NODA Members can claim 10% discount on Theatre Tokens!

Treating someone to a night at the theatre is incredible. Between the laughs, sobs and toe-taps, the right show at the right time can be life changing. But keeping the surprise can be difficult. That's where Theatre Tokens come in.

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Give the gift of theatre!!

NODA Members can now claim **10% off Theatre Tokens**, simply quote **NODA** online at [TheatreTokens.com](https://www.theatretokens.com) or call **Tokenline** on **020 3011 0755** (open Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

[T&Cs apply](#)

REVIEWS
DISTRICT 2 (Dundee & Perthshire)

Alyth Musical Society: Calamity Jane

Director & Choreographer: Gemma Pryde; Musical Director: Colin Grant

Alyth MS took us back to the Black Hills, Dakota territory, for this year's show where Claire Mallinson bounded on to the stage as a rooting-tooting, sharp-shooting, Calamity Jane. She had all the right mannerisms required for this role – the swaggering mannish walk, the “I'm always right” attitude, and she made sure everyone knew she was the boss – especially when she drew her gun in her “Deadwood Stage” number! Then, of course, her character changed to show the seldom seen female side – when she falls in love and where we heard the tender “Secret Love”. The object of her desire was originally Danny Gilmartin but true love never runs smoothly and she was blind to her real true love – the one and only Wild Bill Hickock. Playing the long-suffering, but understanding Hickock, Gerard Cameron was cool, calm and collected as he tried to control Calamity. His fine voice was heard to great effect in his “Higher Than A Hawk”. Into the love story arrives one Katie Brown, mistakenly taken for sought-after pin-up stage star singer, Adelaide Adams (Elaine Murray, playing this important cameo role with great feeling). Katie Brown, the stage star's dresser, was delightfully played by Steph Mackie, perfectly cast as the demure, but frightened dresser, whose aspiration was to become a stage star. Newcomer Robert Oakes made a dashing and handsome Lt Danny Gilmartin and was extremely confident spurning Calamity's advances and trying to outdo Hickock's plans! Comedy is an integral part of this show and Andrew Beckett led the way as the unfortunately-named Francis (with an “i”, not an “e”) Fryer, forced to appear in drag to entertain the Golden Garter clientele with disastrous results! He also showed a nifty pair of feet as he tapped this way through his number. He, too, finds true love with the very understanding Susan (Michelle Kydd Milne). No Alyth show is complete with local “worthy” Ron Kirkpatrick and he popped up as the frenzied Golden Garter owner – Henry Miller. This show has a wonderful musical score and the full company (plus the youngsters) did themselves proud performing it. It is always a sign of a good show you leave it humming at least one of the show's songs and with this show I'll bet it will always be “Black Hills”!

Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society: Masquerade

Director & Choreographer: Frances Irons; Musical Director: Susan Leiper

When the weather turns to spring, it marks the time of year for this society to stage their fund-raising spring concert. On this occasion the Society went “on tour” – presenting their entertainment twice in a local Broughty church hall and then playing their final performance in the Downfield MS Starlight Showroom. Billed as a Musical Merry-Go-Round, it was a selection of songs from West End shows, old and new, performed with great gusto by the Society's members who ably coped with the smallish confines of the stage. There were many highlights, and Moira Inglis and Jill Davidson enthralled us with the fine duet “I Still Believe” from *Miss Saigon*. In the section all about “Marriage”, Hazel Grieve had us all laughing when she sang the very amusing “Waiting At The Church”, and this part of the programme ended with the company performing an energetic “Flash, Bang, Wallop!” The full company were also heard at their best in “Anthem” from *Chess* and in the musical number “Masquerade”, when they all appeared on stage suitably masked. Comedy played a big part in the show and Jill, again, came to the fore in her extremely funny song “The Alto's Lament”, which told the story of how the singer was always fed up with having to sing the boring alto line and desperately wanted to sing the melody line! “The Ballad Of Barry And Freda” also brought forth the laughs when Moira Inglis and George Anderson sang and told this hilarious tale on the stage. Music on a Broadway theme found the male duo of David Newton and Paul Campbell expressing their “Well, Did You Evah?” thoughts in a fine manner, and Vicki Lorimer debated If “My Friends Could See Me Now”. There were songs from *Sister Act*, *Phantom Of The Opera*, and *West Side Story* all on offer and then, all too soon, the evening's musical merry-go-round of music and song slowed down and finally stopped.

Downfield Musical Society: Summer Holiday

Director: Graeme Neil Smith; Musical Director: Paul Clancy; Choreographer: Cara McDyer

I was off on my summer holiday – courtesy of this society! This is a really feel-good musical filled with many Cliff Richard hit songs, among them “Bachelor Boy”, “Livin' Doll”, “Move It”, “On The Beach”, and, of course, the famed “We're All Going On A Summer Holiday”. Four young bus mechanics lads,

during a miserable wet British summer, decide to take a big London Transport double-decker bus and drive it across continental Europe, to reach the South of France (via Athens!) for a holiday. This amicable quartet worked extremely well together and came over as a bunch of likely lads! In true Musketeer fashion – it was all for one, and one for all! Led by Don (Scott McRuvie), his was an enthusiastic, happy-go-lucky, and well assured performance; and then there was Matthew Millar's strong ("windy") Cyril, plus a robust Keiron Bole as "girl-mad" Steve; with Josh Smith playing dependable Edwin. When the lads then meet a trio of young women – singing trio Do Re Me and, later, a famous, runaway singer, pretending to be a male, the holiday becomes that more "complicated" as various relationships begin to develop. The three Do Re Me girls were each superb in each of their own roles, developing their characters perfectly so, take a bow, Mimsie (Rebecca Waghorn), Alma (Joanna Lesslie), and Angie (Rachel Weir). The runaway show singer star, Barbara, was a confident Claire Wallis, playing her with great boyish charm (as the plot demands!). She looked, sang and danced well, and fell in love with Don, thus providing the main love theme in the show. In fact, the entire youthful cast were all in top form and played their roles with flawless ease. Comedy was in the safe hands of a great gruesome twosome – Gillian Brown as the overbearing, protective, but conniving, Stella (Barbara's mother) and the singer's agent, Jerry, in an over-the-top, highly camp performance from Ewan McDyer. He looked hilarious as a moustachioed "Heidi"! The company showed endless energy dancing the well-known musical numbers and, we must not forget the "star" of the show – the big red London Transport bus! It was great to hear all those wonderful Cliff songs of yesteryear and memories came flooding back! Thanks folks, I had a great summer holiday!

Downfield Musical Society Youth: Alice In Wonderland and The Little Mermaid

Director: Graeme Neil Smith; Musical Director: Marlowe Simpson; Choreographer: Rebecca Waghorn

The Society's young members (and there were loads of them!) took to the stage, full of exuberant energy, excitement, and high spirits to bring their two shows to life on the stage. We started off with the *Alice* show and the audience was soon taken to a Wonderland where many wonders were unfolded before them. Now, let me say at this point, that the *Alice* and the *Mermaid* shows both had two large, but different, youth companies to stage each show. Also, both these shows contained a very large principal cast list, so it would be unfair of me just to mention certain principals and none of the others, because all the principal players were in tip-top form and played their parts to absolute perfection. That said, back to "Alice" ... All the well-known and loved characters made their appearance and the renowned story came alive in song and dance, particularly so when the full company performed "Zippity-Doo Dah", and how the young cast looked to be really enjoying it! Next up, was *The Little Mermaid*, where we were all at sea, in the nicest possible way, with this musical version and enjoying every single moment of it. There was some excellent young talent in this cast with a great number of mature voices that augers well for the future well-being of the amateur stage here in the city. One moment we were above the waves and then, the next moment we were all taken below the waves to meet an assortment of fishy characters. The big number "Under The Sea" went down well with the audience and, when the curtain came down at the end of the performance, I am certain there were a lot of proud mums and dads, and other family members cheering the young performers, who stood on stage looking mesmerized, but smiling through it all and accepting the praise from their audience. Well done to everybody in bringing such a happy night of theatre for all concerned.

Dundee Dramatic Society: Dial M For Murder

Director: Elam Longair

Once again, this drama society staged another crime thriller play for their audiences and a play which was well known to mystery aficionados. This was not so much a case of whodunnit, but will he get away with it! The first half of the play sees the setting up of what is the "perfect" murder of his wife, whereas the second part sees how the "perfect" crime falls to pieces. Believing to have planned the perfect murder, Tony Wendice, a professional tennis player, is married to wealthy socialite, Sheila – his intended victim. She, believing him to be a devoted husband, still enjoys the "special" friendship she has with their crime-fiction writer, Max Halliday. As the conniving, evil planning, murder-minded husband, Tony Wendice, John Parkin gave a tour de force performance and was outstanding in this role making it look simple and easy in a part that called for much sarcasm, wit, and evil and, throughout, looked completely at ease as he, eventually, tried to escape the looming gallows! As his evil plan unravelled, he involved the services of the unscrupulous, shady, Captain Lesgate – he of many names and aliases – to perform the actual murder on his behalf. Pat Ward admirably and

splendidly filled this role, leading to his own death – stabbed by scissors! The intended victim should have been the wife, Sheila, who survived the evil scheme and, bringing her attributes to the stage was Linda Mooney, playing the mystified, bewildered, haunted, hysterical, but always trusting wife in a great manner. Then there was her crime-writing friend, Max Halliday, who almost “solved” the mystery in an attempt to clear her name when under sentence of death. Alex Lindsay was truly steady and strong as the friendly Max, desperately attempting to work out the solution to what was a very convoluted plot. As to the solving of this complicated plot, bring on the police! Enter one Inspector Hubbard, and Mat Hodson probed, prodded, and poked away in an easy lackadaisical manner to find out the key to the murder ...actually, the front door key! Mat made it all look so easy as the tension began to rise on the dark and gloomy stage and the audience’s eyes were fixed, expectantly, on the front door ... waiting for it to open! The packed audience very much appreciated the cast’s performance and thanks must also go to the designers of the excellent stage set which must have thrown up several problems to overcome. A great night of intrigue.

Dundee Dramatic Society: Rope

Director: Rory Dunn

Most people are familiar with this play thanks to the Alfred Hitchcock film. It is set in Mayfair in 1929; two friends, Wyndham Brandon and Charles Granillo, have murdered their friend, Ronald Kentley and they hide his body in a wooden chest. They then proceed to host a party for his friends and family at which, the chest containing his corpse, is used to serve up a buffet. Hence the macabre scene is set. Murderer-in-chief Wyndham Brandon had Mat Hodson playing this dominant role. Seldom off the stage, and calling for many dramatic moments, particularly in the final scene of the play, Mat proved that he was worthy and competent of this chilling role. His partner in crime found Vachel Novesha playing the unsure, nervous accomplice, Charles Granillo, in great style, eventually being driven to drinking too much to dull his criminal senses! Faithful servant, Sabot (Ben Gauntlett), ushers in the guests, all friends of the murdered Ronald Kentley (who is never seen!). We meet mild Sir Johnstone Kentley (Bill Dewar), blissfully unaware that his son’s body is in the wooden chest; Mrs Debenham (Dorothy Culloch), a lady of few words! Coreen Pow played the sardonic Leila Arden and, in his first speaking role, Jacob Harrison was the youthful Kenneth Raglan. Into this mix come the prying, probing, suspicious Rupert Cadell and Graeme Murdoch brought his character intensely to life as his suspicions grow of the situation he finds himself in, culminating in his final dramatic scene when he confronts both the murderers and the tension is racked up another notch! There was a superb stage set with some extremely dramatic lighting effects and, in a macabre play of this nature, there was obligatory, but necessary, sound of thunder to rattle along the tension! Thankfully, justice appeared to win!

Note to Marketing Managers:

FREE PUBLICITY!!!

Make sure that all your forthcoming productions are listed on the NODA website as far in advance as you know plans have been made.

NODA Scotland Conference 26-28 October 2018 Peebles Hydro



For those wishing to help spread the cost of this year's NODA Scotland Conference a separate bank account has been set up by the committee to allow members to put aside money as and when they wish. The committee hope this will help attract increased numbers to the conference - please spread the word.

If any member would like to take advantage of this please email the NODA Scotland Councillor (Stuart McCue-Dick) for full details - stuart.dick@noda.org.uk

NODA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 2018

Peebles Hydro

Friday 26 to Saturday 28 October

Dundee Operatic Society: Hello Dolly!

Director & Choreographer: Ross Lesslie; Musical Director: Richard Waghorn

It was nice to see Dolly Levi back in 1890 New York City and say “hello” to her again! Brought to the stage by the inimitable Lynn MacFarlane, a performer with great experience and incredible talent, she gave an outstanding performance as Dolly as she coaxed and wheedled her way through helping others to get what they wanted and what she herself wanted – to marry Horace Vandergelder – the well-known half-a-millionaire! Lynn’s Dolly was demure, bossy, coy, ambitious, totally appealing, and was a delight to watch unfold on the stage. In Horace, we had another player with a considerable amount of stage talent, Sinclair Ross, who brought the hay and feed store boss, Vandergelder, vividly to life in an irascible, but loveable manner. His facial expressions when things went wrong for him were a delight to watch as he muddled his way through the chaotic situations caused by Dolly! Into this mix came Vandergelder’s two store clerks, Cornelius and Barnaby. Cornelius, effortlessly presented by a talented Matthew Miller, is the older of the two clerks, desperately wanting to kiss a girl; and Andrew Waghorn, a spirited, youthful, exuberant Barnaby, just wanted a good time – and, both guys worked well as a team. As the love theme progressed, the boys become embroiled with Mrs Irene Molloy, a hat shop owner and her assistant, scatter-brained Minnie Fay. Rebecca Waghorn (I much enjoyed her “Ribbons” number), made a very pleasing and charming Mrs Molloy and, as her shop assistant, Kirsten Smith was totally immersed as the vague Minnie Fay. Helping the comedy element was Josh Smith as artist Ambrose and Nicole Grant was his always-weeping Ermengarde, both showing great terpsichorean talent. Kris Mordente was a resplendent Rudolf, whilst Jem Clark’s Ernestina was the required over-the-top performance. Dolly’s triumphant return to the Harmonia Gardens was beautifully staged and a joy on the eye and ear. The show’s “nightmare” number – the “Waiters’ Gallop”, came over as a frenzied, innovative piece of choreography. There were lots of lovely production touches and an amazing aspect of this was the fact that Director/Choreographer Ross also designed and built the entire stage set, which cleverly concealed the on-stage orchestra. There were great choral ensembles in the “Sunday Clothes”, “Dancing” and “Parade” numbers. All too soon it was Cheerio Dolly!

Dundee Scout Association: Scout Gang Show 2018

Director: Stacey McPherson; Assistant Director: Brodie Mulholland;
Musical Director: Richard Waghorn; Choreographers: Karla Geekie, Aimee Brown

This year the Gang is under new management – in other words, a completely new production team is in place and, as a result, there are changes to the look of the show. This year, the emphasis was mainly on music and the Gang took to the stage in numerous big musical numbers. In the show’s Opening, the Gang sang the Proclaimers’ number “We’re On Our Way” – and they certainly were as they all sang out lustily and smiled at the same time. After catching our breath, the very young Beavers suddenly appeared telling us, in song, how they survived their very first camp, with amusing results! Not content with that, they then had the entire audience on their feet participating in their “action song”, “Singing In The Rain”! Great fun! Next up came a *9 To 5* number as the cast, dressed in various work costumes, took us through a working day. Comedy followed with the youngsters supporting Dundee or United in a funny football item. Then *Oz* appeared, and off we went down the Yellow Brick Road with its much-loved songs, plus a few from *Wicked*. The first half Finale was all about friends and contained a hidden tribute to local Dundee charity called “Befriends”. In the opening of the second half, the Gang all went to Hell! And also, to Heaven! This was a musical spot containing songs with these words in it, which was quickly followed by “Going To The Chapel” which was a wedding extravaganza. The older members of the cast then took us on a “Decades Of Dance”, showing dancing styles throughout the ages. The stakes were then changed when “Viva Las Vegas” was staged with its gambling and poker themes. The theatre then darkened and suddenly, before our eyes, appeared Stickmen, six costumed dancers all energetically performing under UV light in a marvellous theatre spectacle. There was also the two-parter song tale of “Taylor The Latte Boy” performed by a competent male and female duo. But, all too soon, the Gang appeared sitting on tiered rostra, and wearing their famed red scarves, to present their musical Finale. They’d sung; they’d danced; and they’d smiled the whole evening, and now it was time to say goodnight. Well done, Gang, for great evening of entertainment.

Note to all members:

If you are on Facebook please like and share posts on the NODA Scotland page.

Perth Amateur Musical Society: Sister Act

Director: Maximilian Clay; Musical Director: Joe Whiteman; Choreographer: Robyn Goodfellow

After an absence of several years the Society returned to their original “home” – the newly revamped Perth Theatre, where they performed before a packed audience. This show is currently doing the rounds in and around the local area and this society is one of the many companies to perform it. And, hallelujah and praise be, what a good choice it was too! Right from the start Kirsty Watson gave us a larger-than-life Deloris Van Cartier and stamped her authority on her role as the night club singer fleeing from the mob and ending up disguising herself as a nun, going under the name of Sister Mary Clarence in a run-down convent. And boy, did she have the voice to belt out her big vocal numbers! Supported by a strong group of assorted nuns, Anne Kemp stood out as the despairing Irish Mother Superior with her many comic one-liners, aided and abetted by a large group of nuns, who were all named Mary! Mary Patrick, humble Bekkie McKenzie; and straight-faced Lazarus, in the safe hands of Jane Taylor; with Robert – a timid and shy Sarah Cowmeadow, who was anything but that singing “The Life I Never Led”. This is a great show for women to perform in and, unless you are playing one of the main cast men, the show does not really require a male chorus. Newcomer, Owen Thomson, was at his best as “Sweaty” Eddie, the policeman, and his quick costume change in his big song number was perfectly executed. There is always a “Baddie” and he came in the shape of experienced Gavin Russell turning in a fine performance as hoodlum, Curtiss. His fellow hoodlums raised the laughs with their “Lady In The Long Black Dress” and congratulations go to Joey (Stewart Forbes), TJ (Dougie Lawson), and Pablo (Christie Young). And who could forget Niall Robertson as a really “with it” Monsignor O’Hara! The Nuns’ ensemble all looked to be enjoying every moment on stage as they hip-hopped through their musical numbers with much enthusiasm. Yup! Praise be to you all!

Tayport Amateur Dramatic and Musical Society: Hairspray

Director: Scott McRuvie; Musical Director: Robert Nee; Choreographer: Madelene Harper

The Society took us back to 1962 Baltimore, and a “star” came out of the shadows and shone brightly throughout the show. Chelsea Whatley, as Tracy Turnblad, the overweight High School student desperate to appear on television in *The Corny Collins Show*. gave us a first-class performance, looking confident and assured throughout in her once in a lifetime role and looked as if she was enjoying every single moment. This was a big character part carried off with absolute perfection. Well done! This show is very much youth oriented and TADAMS had amassed a full-blown bunch of young people to perform this show with their enthusiasm, pizzazz and energy, and they used all these attributes to perform the many energetic dance routines – of which there were many! There are numerous parts to play in this show and the cast did themselves proud portraying the assorted characters. Gravel-voiced Gavin White, in drag, was impeccable as overweight Mum Edna Turnblad, and his wise-cracking stage asides were timed to perfection. Joined by Brian Boardman as adoring husband, Wilber, this pair brought the house down with their comedy duet “You’re Timeless To Me”. Darren Handy was perfect as teenage heart-throb, Link Larkin, with whom Tracy falls in love, and Billy Naismith was loud and proud as Corny Collins, the TV show compere. Tracy’s devoted friend, Penny Pingleton, was very nicely played by Carley Mackie who meets Seaweed J. Stubbs, a dancer, enthusiastically played by Neil Hutton. In the world of TV, we met two “spiteful” ladies – a mother and daughter team, producer Velma Von Tussle (Claire Rioch) and Eilidh Robertson as her offspring Amber. But, despite being “nasty”, we did enjoy their performances! Jenna Davidson was completely unrecognizable as big, blonde and beautiful Motormouth Maybelle who gave us a sassy, vibrant, larger than life performance, particularly in her big number “I know Where I’ve Been”. Also adding their talents was Lynne Binnie as a prim Prudy Pingleton, and Tasha Smith as fiesty Li’l Inez. There was boundless energy throughout this performance from the company and, by the time the show’s big hit number came along, TADAMS, you did not stop the beat!

Tayside Opera: La Traviata

Director: Alan Borthwick; Musical Director: Richard Johnston; Choreographer: Leah Lynch

To celebrate its 50th Anniversary the company decided to perform a fully staged production of one of Verdi’s most well-loved works – *La Traviata*. With nine named principals, a chorus of 21 and six dancers, all backed by an orchestra of 18, this was indeed a “grand opera”. From the opening notes of the overture it was obvious we were to enjoy an evening of delightful music and song. Moira Docherty as Violetta Valery had a faultless and expressive soprano voice along with strong acting skills – all three being shown to their best for me in her aria “Farewell, lovely, happy dreams of the

past" in Act III. She was equally matched by tenor Michael Doroszenko as her, often misguided, lover Alfredo Germont. His soaring tenor voice was at its best in his Act II aria "The youthful ardour of my ebullient spirits". Russell Malcolm as Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father, gave an excellent performance and his rich baritone blended well with Violetta's in their Act II duet "Tell the young girl, so beautiful and pure". Strong support was given by Susan Jenkin (Flora Bervoix), Kirsten Mann (Annina, Violetta's maid), Paul McKay (Gaston, Alfredo's friend), Michael Turner (Baron Douphol), Michael Jamieson (Marquis D'Obigny) and Jordan Lynch (Doctor Grenvil). The chorus singing was extremely strong as shown particularly in the brindisi in Act I "Drink from the joyful cup". The costumes were beautiful and appropriate to the period. As the production was being taken on a short tour, the set was of necessity simple but effective. Overall a marvellous evening. Congratulations to all at Tayside Opera for making grand opera accessible to so many over the past 50 years and long may they continue to do so!

Douglas Clark

Thomson-Leng Musical Society: All Shook Up!

Director: Donna Bell; Musical Director: Billy Muir; Choreographer: Jenni Main

It was back to the Swinging Fifties for this show – and the company had the theatre totally rocking with their performance as the Presley songs came thick and fast, one after another, which the full company attacked brilliantly and, in doing so, gave full justice to the famous songs. There was a full-throttled "Jailhouse Rock" to open the show and the Act I finale gave us a wonderful musical sound in "Can't Help Falling In Love". The principal players were all extremely well cast and all outstanding. Leading the way and playing the hip-swivelling, guitar playing roustabout, Chad, found Ryan Milne at his personal best. His was a rip-roaring performance containing all the necessary motions and gestures and it was an energetic performance, too – his leap-frog jump over a standing female was an absolute cracker to see! He had the necessary looks and great voice in putting over the famous songs. Equally outstanding was Rachel Hogg as Natalie, a young mechanic dreaming of love and adventure, and she also gave us her personal best especially in "One Night with You". Such a shame the plot demands this character disguise herself as a man, meaning she has to cover her face with a "shaving shadow" throughout a large part of the show. But ... Rachel you still looked lovely, which was just as the story line required! There are many love "stories" throughout the show and one wonders who is going to get who, until all is revealed in the finale when there are numerous weddings. Among the assorted characters are Dennis, put over in great style by Greg McGonigal as a happy, hyper-active, "gormless" person; Terri Roberts was an excellent Lorraine, the daughter of local honky tonk owner, Sylvia, (Emily Moore), who delighted with "There's Only Me"; and skilled Ellen Ryder played glamorous Sandra, the museum owner; then there was Mayor Matilda (Lucy Reilly) who bullied the town in no uncertain manner and outlawed "life's pleasures"! Craig Rose excelled as Jim, the garage owner, who turns into a leather-jacketed roustabout, and Connor Wilson impressed as Dean, the Mayor's son who finds out some startling truths! And who can forget the "silent" Sheriff Earl, Neil Hartley who, when he finally speaks, brings much laughter! This spirited performance definitely had the audience *All Shook Up* with its many well-known songs and was a great night out for all concerned!

REVIEWS DISTRICT 3 (Central Scotland)

Alloa Musical Players: 9 to 5

Director & Choreographer: Kaye Finlay; Musical Director: Aileen Sweeney

Lively, confident and engaging were my thoughts on this last night performance. Chorus and principals sang wholeheartedly and harmoniously, matched with well choreographed moves. Taking to heart the role of Violet the overlooked secretary, was first timer with AMP Laura McPherson. She took command of the role and sang with authority combining sensitivity and compassion and being a calm foil to the rapacious boss. Lesley Kettles captured the larger than life Dolly Parton role of Dolores, at first bewildered by office hostility then furious in response to the boss's rumour that they were having an affair. Likewise Lesley Caldwell brings to life the hurt and damaged divorcee Judy who gains confidence to reject the returning husband. All three ladies were strong singers, blending beautifully in "I Just Might" and entertaining royally in their antics and solos while under the influence. Meanwhile the object of all their angst is boss Franklin Hart whose behaviour alienates and repels. Alan Musgrave took on this difficult role with assurance – conceit, deceit and lust oozing out of him.

The one female who thought Hart could do no wrong was office snoop Roz. Alison Wright threw herself into the role, making her own the solo "Heart To Hart" and fully deserving being sent off on a language course. Kevin Doherty as Joe, suitor for Violet, sang beautifully in their duet "Let Love Grow". All were ably supported by minor principals. The chorus worked well and energetically in numbers like "9 to 5" and "One of the Boys". I liked the set with its abstract shapes hung above office desks and the home – believable and apt. Musically the show held well together and the orchestra was well paced. With many memorable moments including the tragic-comic hospital scene, the company gave a performance to be proud of. Congratulations to everyone.

Callander Amateur Operatic Society: Oliver!

Director: Iain Fraser; Musical Director: Linda Cantlay

A new MD and Callander Kirk Junior Choir were happy additions to this company's show. The opening chorus of the workhouse orphans was beautifully sung and enunciated. Here as in the Fagin Gang numbers, the youngsters showed concentration and discipline. The young people having set the bar, the principals topped it with some wonderful singing of their own. Angela Dickinson as Widow Corney and Dan McKirgan as Mr Bumble sang their duet "I Shall Scream" with style and humour, he thinking he was wooing her, while she reeled him in. Mr Bumble hit all the right notes in the testing "Boy for Sale". John McGettigan sang a confident Oliver in the touching "Where is Love?", and showed a different side in his response to bullying and in his naivety at the antics in the thieves' den. In the quicksilver character of The Artful Dodger, Aiden Cronin captured the cocky Londoner and was no mean singer in his own right. Brian McKay gave us a wily Fagin, never missing a beat in "Pick a Pocket" and "Be Back Soon" numbers, while displaying ironic humour in "Reviewing the Situation". As Nancy, Lorna Stevens with her clear, modulated voice, understood the complexities of the role and commanded the stage. Feisty yet vulnerable, she sang "As Long As He Needs Me" with touching but mistaken belief that Bill Sykes actually needed her. The domineering Bill Sykes was well interpreted by Grant Webb cowing the punters in the pub, singing with menace and, to save his own skin, murdering Nancy, the one good thing in his life. The harmonised reprise of "It's A Fine Life" in Act II was a delight as was "Who Will Buy?". The chorus was suitably raucous and refined. This was a well produced show an example being a well executed Undertaker's Scene: with credit to Euan Murphy as Noah, and to Charlotte McFarlane as Mrs Sowerberry, striking a truly 'sour' peal over hen pecked Mr Sowerberry, Steve Murphy. Minor principals added to the credibility of the performance. Costumes of the boys were suitably grubby in stark contrast to that of more polite society. Musically the orchestra had good tone and pace and, for me, a highlight was the beautifully played violin in "Reviewing the Situation". All played their part in a hugely enjoyable production.

Falkirk Operatic Society: Made In Dagenham

Director & Choreographer: Judy Brown; Musical Director : Jon-Luke Kirton

I was not familiar with the show but this production was certainly slick, funny, hard-hitting and entertaining, providing plenty opportunities for the full Society throughout. It is safe to say there was not one weak link on stage as the story of the landmark strike by female sewing machinists at Ford's Dagenham plant was rolled out. Uniting the show, Victoria Daley excelled as wife, mother and leader of the factory workers Rita and was matched by Grant-Scott Johnston as husband Eddie. Lily Tracey and Mia Hamilton were cast as their daughter Sharon in alternate performances, with Adam Stewart as their brother Graham. Lorna Wallace was outstanding as the coarse and outspoken factory worker Beryl and Julia Shaw made a perfect ditsy factory worker, Clare. Carol Sutherland gave a moving performance of shop steward Connie and her plea to take action now. Other factory workers included Melissa Cook (Cass), Nikki Johnstone (Sandra), with Eric Brown as Monty the NUVB Convenor, Chris Hogg and Chris Brooks as Sid and Bill the Union Shop Stewards. Anne Rice elegantly supported and befriended the strikers as Lisa Hopkins, contrasting well with Malcolm McNulty as the Managing Director Mr Hopkins. Susan McFarlane was a knock out as Barbara Castle attired in a C&A dress and Allan Brisbane made a fine pipe sucking Prime Minister Harold Wilson, complete with the famous 'Gannex'. The remaining principals joined by the entire cast all contributed to my enjoyment. The great thing about this funny, thoughtful and uplifting storyline is that it goes beyond the central message but never loses focus. It has all the necessary elements for a highly entertaining musical including a collection of wonderful original songs and all well orchestrated. Well done to the production team and what was an amazing cast! Thank you for inviting me to your show.

David Black

noda

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Larbert Operatic Society: Sweet Charity

Director: Derek D. Easton; Musical Director: Jan Cunningham; Choreographer: Yolande Borthwick

With great numbers like "Big Spender" and "Rhythm of Life", a cast in fine voice and talented principals, the company gave their audience lots to enjoy. The story of dancehall hostess looking for love and a meaningful relationship is a poignant one. Michelle Weston in the leading singing and dancing role of Charity catches her naivety and resilience. Rarely off the stage, with her powerful and versatile voice she poured her heart out in "Where Am I Going?" and "You Should See Yourself" and brought humour and pathos to "If My Friends Could See Me Now". Her relationship with the needy man she met in the lift kept us hoping all would turn out fine. This man Oscar Lindquist was played convincingly by John Coe, a seasoned performer, as the needy paranoid. They paired confidently, harmoniously and hopefully in their shared numbers but in the end his self interest could not accept her past. Charity had the support of seemingly worldly wise friends Nickie and Helen, performed by Greer Robertson and Chiara Sportelli, who, on news of her wedding, turned out emotionally fragile. Their singing "There's Gotta Be Something Better Than This" and their harmonies in "Baby Dream Your Dream" were well delivered. Good cameo roles were undertaken by Colin Fawkes and Jo Simpson as Vittorio and his fiancée Ursula. The bedroom scene was a humour highlight and both had strong stage presence. Andrew Gibson gave a good account of himself as the cult leader Daddy Brubeck leading an energetic "Rhythm of Life". Stewart Borthwick embodied the domineering and prowling dancehall boss whose voice underpinned the closing number. Minor characters of Carmen the cynical hostess and Rosie the new hostess played by Dale Henry and Chloe Kennedy contributed to the action. Even director Derek got in the act with his all too brief butler role. With costumes glittering to create the ambience of a dance hall, the cast sang and moved as one. The show had seriously good movement and particularly well choreographed and effective in the black and white outfits was the "Rich Man's Frug". The orchestra created a good sound and complemented the singers. Congratulations all round.

Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions Children's Theatre: Les Misérables (School Edition)

Director: Calum Campbell; Musical Director: Eddie MacLennan; Choreographer: Hayley Fleming

LAMP's Children's Theatre was a very young cast and their performance was incredible. The understanding of their roles, the high standard of singing and the assuredness of their movements made me forget that these performers were children. The chorus numbers, like the principal roles, delivered on notes, harmonies and diction ensuring that the storyline was clear to follow. Every one of the chorus had a part to play and by doing so gave immediacy and reality to the scenes, particularly the chain gang, factory, inn and barricade scenes. Well choreographed, the Lovely Ladies showed a maturity beyond their years. Josh Ure as Jean Valjean made his mark, taking us on his journey from thief to factory owner and Mayor to rescuer of Marius and Javert. This challenging singing role was met head on with a heartfelt "Who Am I?" culminating in a moving "Bring Him Home". Against him was the bullying and towering presence of Gregor McLean whose ponderous deliberations reflected his blinkered attitude to the world. Libby Hardie as young Cosette, tugged at emotions in "Castle on a Cloud". Her mother Fantine was well drawn by Rona Millar who found edge and pathos in being spurned and in pleading for her daughter. Tom Barclay epitomised the consummate, self seeking Thenadier in his theft of the living and the dead, and in his grotesque Masquerade at The Wedding. His dark comedy was ably matched by Catherine Bain as Mde Thenadier who caught the two faced nature of his wife. In contrast Katie Rough gave us a sincere and sympathetic Cosette whose love for Valjean and Marius was re affirming; likewise Daisy Mackie living the unrequited love Eponine had for Marius with a beautifully rendered "On My Own". Paul MacDonald as Marius showed idealism brought up short by the reality of action, coming into his own singing "Empty Tables". The young men at the barricades brought another dimension where Oscar Davies gave a convincing Enjolras in fine voice as he commanded his band of men while Isla Paton gave us an engaging Gavroche, entertaining to the full with his "Little People" and courage. Do you hear the people sing? Loud and clear. Talented individuals and team players all and a credit to the production team.

The Livingston Players: Blitz

Director: John Hutchinson; Musical Director: Crawford Moyes; Choreographer: Lynne Hurst

Lional Bart's *Blitz* is performed less frequently than his *Oliver!* yet this musical has some fabulous music and a storyline which mixes nostalgia, fun, humour and sadness. The plot focuses mainly on

two feuding families, the Jewish Blitzsteins and the Cockney Lockes with the younger members of these opposite families falling in love and, despite their parents' objections, determined to be together. An open stage immediately set the scene with the backdrop of St. Paul's Cathedral and newsreels of London during the blitz. Throughout the production the audio visual input, lighting and sound effects were used to great effect, creating real imagery of the period and capturing the true spirit of life during World War 2. The strong, defiant opening number "Our Hotel" successfully established the community spirit and the feeling that this group of Londoners would pull together through whatever was thrown at them. This scene in the underground is where we meet most of the principal characters. The undoubted leader of the group is the matriarchal Mrs Blitzstein who owns the pickled herring stall in Petticoat Lane. Gill Sullivan gave a fine performance in this role. Rarely off the stage she conveyed most convincingly the humour, tragedy, pathos and mixed emotions that she lived through, while trying to do the right thing for her family and the community. The soliloquy "So Tell Me Jack" was a real tour de force. She has no time for Alfred Locke, the cockney with the fruit stall, and Alistair Thomas played well as the cantankerous Alfred, mixing aggression with humour as he and Mrs. Blitzstein spit barbed comments at each other. Suzie Smail was charming as young Carol Blitzstein who loves Georgie Locke and who is tragically blinded in an air raid. It isn't easy to act being blind but this was done quite convincingly. Jack Stewart was a believable Georgie, the lovable good guy soldier determined to fight for his country. He certainly came into his own in Act II with alcohol helping him cope with the dilemma of his feelings for Carol in "Who Wants to Settle Down". This scene when he and Mrs. Blitzstein come together and he eventually realises that he can settle down with Carol despite her blindness was emotive and well played. Stuart Laws quickly established the character of the Jack The Lad, playboy Harry Blitzstein, who having caused his mother heartache eventually comes good in his spirited "Duty Calls". Chiara Loia has a lively stage presence and portrayed the saucy Elsie with a good singing voice, leading "Leave It To The Ladies". Her rival in love Mrs. Joyce Matthews and friend Peg Murphy were ably played by Lynne Hurst and Joanna Robertson respectively. Rik Kay and Judith Hutchinson worked well together as the Jewish couple Mr. and Mrs. Josephs while Alex Rankine the very Scottish Ernie Nearmiss kept the comedy going with his interjections and partnership with Alfred in the patriotic "As Long As This Is England". "We're Going To The Country" saw a delightful group of children saying farewell to their emotional parents as they were being evacuated and obviously had great fun playing 'Mums and Dads' on their return. These main principal characters were ably supported by the many cameo roles. There are lots of big production numbers in *Blitz* and these were well directed. The big chorus numbers were very well sung and moved by the company. "Who's This Geezer Hitler?" and "Is This Gonna Be A Wedding?" exuded energy and joy. The bustling "Petticoat Lane" was stylish and "The Day After Tomorrow" was sung with great feeling. Choreography too was neatly executed and precise. The final scene of Act I seeing the soldiers march off to war was well staged. An unobtrusive on stage orchestra was very well balanced and well controlled supporting the singers with this uplifting score. I did enjoy listening to the play out. Costumes and hair styles were well suited to the period. This was altogether a most enjoyable production which moved along at a good pace and had me singing my way home. A production which deserved a bigger audience than on the night I was there.

Dorothy Johnstone

Stirling & Bridge of Allan Operatic Society: Oliver!

Directors: Andrew Nicol, Linda Ormiston; Musical Director: Andrew Nicol;

Choreographer: Gwyneth Grant

With lots of youngsters, two Olivers and two Dodgers on alternative performances with different teams, this was bound to be a lively show. Lucas Cuthbert played a determined Oliver, with a clear, true voice, engaging admiration for his poignant "Where is Love?" and his plight with Sykes. His rapport with The Artful Dodger and Nancy was patent, with their numbers well delivered. Alexander Bland played a confident Dodger leading Oliver into a rousing and well choreographed "Consider Yourself" and pairing with Nancy to ape the toffs in "It's A Fine Life". I would think that Dylan Clark and Jake Speed would bring similar characteristics to these roles. The Workhouse Children and Fagin's gang sang beautifully, in character, and moved effortlessly in their routines. A real stage presence was David Campbell as a Fagin who caught the mix of this complex character with the miserly demeanour, the charm of the trainer of thieves, dislike of violence, and an aim of protecting No 1 – all evident in "Pick a Pocket" and "Reviewing the Situation". His once trainee Nancy, ably played by Lisa Goldie brought a freshness to the role in her compassion for Oliver and in her courage in defying her lover. "As Long As He Needs Me" resonated her feelings and mistaken convictions of her lover, Sykes. In this role Darren Tasker pinned, in action and nuance, the violent bully, terrifying the inn

customers in "My Name" and awful as he bludgeoned Nancy to death. As well as these dark scenes, light relief came in the wooing scene of Mr Bumble and Mrs Corney. David McCabe and Jane Kerr sportively courted each other for their own ends and in Act II delightful was her manipulation of her husband, and plaintive and comic was Mr Bumble's heartfelt cry that 'the Law is an ass'. Likewise the macabre undertaker's scene saw Chris Taylor and Simon Thomas give life to the marital conflict between the strident Mrs Sowerberry and her long suffering husband. All minor principals – Bet, Charlie, Charlotte, Noah, Mr Brownlow, Mrs Bedwin and Dr Grimwig – contributed to the drama while the adult chorus sang raucously and harmoniously giving colour to the crowd scenes. Well sung and slickly managed, this was a thoroughly enjoyable production.

REVIEWS

DISTRICT 4 (Renfrewshire, Ayrshire & Bute)

Cumnock Area Musical Productions Society: 9 to 5 – The Musical

Director: Ciss McCreddie; Assistant Director: Ann Black;
Musical Director: Dale Parker; Choreographer: Kirsty Langfield

It was lovely to be welcomed back so warmly by CAMPS after seeing their panto *Peter Pan* in December, for their production of *9 to 5 – The Musical*. Thank you to Helen for the hospitality and Ciss for the tour backstage to see behind the scenes. It was lovely to meet some of the cast, and interesting to see the small wing / backstage space that Cumnock Town Hall offers as a venue. The club and crew should be commended on the clever way they used the snug side wing and backstage space along with creative staging to bring this musical to their local audience. *9 to 5*, based on the 1980 movie of the same name, features music from Dolly Parton, and Dolly even made an appearance in Cumnock ... well regrettably not in person but via voice over at the start and end of the show. The show focuses round the story of three working women who live out their fantasies of getting even with and overthrowing their "sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot" boss. The roles of the three leading ladies; Violet Newstead (Anne Hainey), Doralee Rhodes (Lyndsay Cook) and Judy Bernley (Skye Galloway) were superbly performed and all three worked very well together while still accenting their individual characters. In particular the songs "I Just Might" and "Shine Like The Sun" were outstanding. Congratulations to Anne, Lyndsay and Skye for their strong performances and first-rate solo numbers. Their nemesis boss, the sleazy Franklin Hart Jr, was played excellently by Craig Gilchrist, who gave the audience a colourful character they loved to hate. The other featured male principals were tackling a couple of roles each and were well played by Murray Dixon as Josh Newstead / Detective, Tom Campbell as Dick / Tinsworthy, and Dempster Slimmon as Joe / Dwayne. All characters were different and a huge well done to all three for this tough undertaking. The ensemble was very strong and in particular the featured characters of Missy Hart (Siobhan Brannigan), Kathy (Thea Slimmon), the tipsy Margaret (Danna Leitch), Doctor (Scott Riddex) and Candy Striper (Billie McChesney). A comedy delight was that of Millie Graham's performance of Franklin Hart's devoted assistant Roz Keith. Millie's characterisation was brilliant; she had the audience in stitches, and her numbers "Heart to Hart" and "5 to 9" were hysterical and very well done. Another of the key highlights to the show were the impressive vocals during all principal and ensemble numbers under the talented leadership of Musical Director Dale. Congratulations to the club on another successful production.

EROS Musical Society: Bad Girls – The Musical

Director: Jon Cuthbertson; Musical Director: Aileen Shaw; Choreographer: Jennifer McKay

With a story based around the characters from the original TV programme it meant the audience, especially if they were fans of the programme were in for a treat as EROS brought the characters to life, in this lively musical. The use of a static main set to the rear of the stage and moving trucks to take us through the various other scenes, allowed director Jon to keep the pace moving throughout the show. With the story focusing on the inmates and prison officers of HMP Larkhall, we follow the optimistic new Wing Governor Helen Stewart as she fights with some of the more stalwart members of staff to improve the rehabilitation of the prisoners. The role of Helen Stewart was played flawlessly by Hazel Keay. Hazel's admirable characterisation allowed us to see a woman who was a strong professional, relaxed outside work and struggling with her emotions for inmate Nikki Wade. Clashing with Helen is the baddie character, who in a show like this we love to hate, Officer Jim Fenner. Fenner was captured perfectly by Jonathan Proctor. Jonathan's charisma, strong vocals and acting brought a balanced character to the audience as they chuckled along with him and then at him as

they witnessed his demise. The comedy side of Fenner was highlighted with the comical Tracey Fraser as Senior Officer Sylvia Hollamby. The conversations with Tracey and Jonathan were hilarious and their numbers "Jailcraft" and "The Future Is Bright", the latter of which saw them tapping in sparkly outfits, were highpoints. The prison staff roles were completed confidently by Mike Denholm as Junior Officer Justin Mattison, Ian McAulay as Governing Governor, and David Clark as Senior Officer. The prisoners, a real mix of characters, brought the cells of Larkhall to life. There were touching performances from Laura Wilson as Nikki Wade and Kirsten Keenan as Rachael Hicks, as they struggled with emotions and life in prison. Humour came from the quirky characters of Noreen Biggs and Crystal Gordon played by Lorna Cunningham and Alison Mathers respectively. More comic relief was brought by Jane Sinclair and Denise Smith as Julie Saunders and Julie Johnston, or affectionately known better as The Two Julies. Jane and Denise worked very well together and had the audience laughing throughout. The larger than life character of Shell Dockley was captured perfectly by Jennifer McKay who had fabulous stage presence fitting to the strong character of Shell. Jennifer also choreographed the show, which should be commended. Shell's sidekick Denny Blood played by Linsey Todd brought an innocence to the story with Linsey and Jennifer working well as a duo. Now what would a musical be without some glamour? Even in a prison setting this was provided by Lesley Wilson as Yvonne Atkins. Lesley commanded the stage with her self-assured character of Yvonne throughout the show, balancing this with a softer maternal side towards Denny. Again Linsey and Lesley worked well to capture the gentle side of the characters, in particular Linsey who contrasted this with the hard side of Denny when she is around Shell and the other inmates. The main principal cast telling the story of these characters were well supported by a small but strong ensemble who provided consistent vocals in each musical number throughout the show.

Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth: Sister Act

Director: Blair Ledgerwood-Cruikshank; Musical Director: Karen McKay;
Choreographer: Chris Glasgow

Based on the much loved 1992 hit film, *Sister Act* is the complete package of a modern feel good musical comedy. From the minute the overture starts there is a high level of energy required to bring this story to life and transport us back to the 1970s, and Harlequin did not disappoint. The first character we meet is the fabulous Deloris Van Cartier, who we follow throughout the show. With very little rest time off stage this is a very demanding role to perform, and it was outstandingly portrayed by Anna Cowan who gave a powerhouse performance throughout. A true triple threat, Anna's characterisation was faultless throughout her acting, singing and dancing. Starting the show off auditioning with her backing singer girlfriends, the comical and lively Michelle and Tina, confidently played by Caroline Bury and Kirstin West, Deloris witnesses a murder committed by her lover Curtis. Capturing Curtis contrastingly with menacingly evil and comedy was Iain Shearer. Iain was supported fantastically by his 'gang of goons': the charismatic Joey (Jack McNeilage), comical Spanish (Max Yuill), and twinkle toes funny-man TJ (Ruaridh Burns). The solid performances from all four boys was lovely to see, especially in their numbers "When I Find My Baby" and "Lady In The Long Black Dress". In an attempt to protect Deloris she is placed into witness protection by the hero of the show Eddie (Kevin Glasgow). Kevin's portrayal of this sweaty and geeky police officer was great to watch and his number "I Could Be That Guy" had the audience cheering and laughing throughout. Dealing with the tricky costume changes with effortlessness during the song should be commended ... especially keeping the audience in stitches while dealing with a trouser leg that was not for coming off! Eddie finds the perfect place to hide Deloris, in the convent of course. Although the audience who are fans of the show and film know what's coming, the first entrance of the nuns with their unique off key singing was well received and very funny. Continuing the comedy in the convent was Sophie Aziz who captured the stern Mother Superior with certainty and gave a flawless characterisation and vocal throughout. In contrast to Mother Superior was the energetic and happy Sister Mary Patrick (Aimee Mejury), sweet and gentle Sister Mary Robert (Rebecca Baillie) and comedic hip-hop dancing Sister Mary Lazarus (Kara McQueen). All three girls worked well together and were supported fantastically by a talented ensemble of nuns including the mind wandering Sister Mary Martin of Tours (Siobhan Archibald) and the very old, old, old, Sister Mary Theresa (Iman Akhtar). The full ensemble and Musical Director Karen should be congratulated for the strong vocal numbers throughout which left me blown away by the power and success of the complex harmonies, especially in "Sunday Morning Fever". Special mention also to Jamie McQueen for his hilarious performance and take on Monsignor O'Hara. With sparkling choreography from Chris, a clever use of set and lovely characterisation from director Blair, and the support from a committed Harlequin crew and committee the show was truly "Fabulous Baby!". Well done!

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Norman Lake, Alnwick Stage Musical Society

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Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group: The Full Monty

Director: Roy McGregor; Assistant Director: Craig Inglis; Musical Director: Andrew Scott;
Choreographer: Fiona McGregor

This was the first time I had seen the stage adaptation of the well known film of the same name. Whilst sticking to the story of the film very closely there is one significant difference with the action now being set in Buffalo, New York, rather than Sheffield, England. Despite this the show was funny, moving and thought provoking in equal measure. The show requires a strong group of male principals and Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group were fortunate to have been able to assemble such a group. In the lead role of Jerry Lukowski Paul McWilliams gave an assured performance as the father struggling to provide for his son Nathan played to great effect by John Steel. Barry Orr as Dave Bukatinsky brought out the comedy of his character as well as generating a great deal of sympathy as he struggles with the idea that anyone would want to see him strip. Daniel McDonald (Malcolm MacGregor) and Terence McGee (Ethan Girard) worked well together as the unlikely couple of the group with some very touching scenes as they struggled with all that life had thrown at them. Alex Long (Harold Nichols) and Iain McLellan (Noah (Horse) T. Simmons) completed the line-up of "strippers" bringing out all the nuances of each character providing some extremely funny moments. Mhairi Heron (Georgie Bukatinsky), Shiranne Burns (Pam Lukowski) and Jillian McCall (Vicki Nichols) were well cast against their respective husbands and greatly added to both the humour and the emotion of the show in equal measure. Carol McLaughlan as the "rarely sober" rehearsal pianist was at her very best never missing an opportunity for a laugh which was greatly enhanced by her outrageous outfits. All the other minor principals supported by the strong chorus added greatly to the show and it was obvious they were all enjoying themselves. Director Roy McGregor ensured the show moved along at a good pace and this was helped by a clever fixed set. Although the songs from the show are not well known, they really helped to enhance the show and MD Andrew Scott and his well-balanced band never over powered soloists or chorus. Fiona McGregor had obviously worked hard with both principals and chorus and the choreography was appropriate and added to the overall enjoyment. Well done to all concerned on and off stage for a great afternoon of musical theatre at its best. Congratulations on celebrating your 55th anniversary by "going all the way" and achieving *The Full Monty*.

Stuart McCue-Dick

Johnstone Phoenix Youth Theatre: Annie Jr

Director: Hazel Keay; Musical Director: Cat Clark; Choreographer: Aly Lamond

It was an honour and a little surreal to be sitting in the audience to watch Johnstone Phoenix Youth Theatre present their 25th Anniversary production of *Annie Jr*. Since this is the club where my am-dram journey began it was a special night. It was also lovely to be watching the show beside the person who started me off on this journey 20 years ago, founder of the club and friend Margaret Carmichael. As the overture started, watching all the orphans enter into the orphanage set to collect their teddies from under a hat stand, which would at the end be echoed in them collecting more extravagant presents from under the Christmas tree in Warbucks' mansion, it was enjoyable to see each bring their own individual characterisation to life. Kicking off the show was the adorable Melissa Keay as Molly waking up the other orphans after a bad dream. We then met the feisty Pepper and July played by Sara Todd and Amelia McDonald as they begin to fight, much to the dismay of the delightful Tessie played by Erin MacLean. Tessy's tag line of 'oh my goodness' was both sweet and funny in the right measure. Adding to the energetic principal orphans were Mya Gillespie as Duffy and Georgia McKay as Kate. The unrest is soon settled by Annie as she enters to calm Molly and put things right with the others. Playing Annie was Alannah Pollock who gave a controlled, charming and truly powerhouse performance from start to finish in the title role. Credit should also be given to Alannah for singing "Tomorrow" while controlling a very spritely Sandy. The harmony in the opening scenes is disrupted by the harsh Miss Hannigan. Miss Hannigan was portrayed excellently by Jessica Kerr who gave a mature performance with impeccable characterisation. Her more laidback or wearied character was contrasted by the elegant Grace Farrell played by Eilidh McCartney. Eilidh's poise, soft voice and grace (well-fitting for the part) was delightful and well delivered. Commanding the role of Oliver Warbucks was Jamie Porter, who with consistent vocals and a characterisation that showed both strength and a softer side, as he realises he might lose his adoption request for Annie, resulted in an accomplished character. Comedy was provided by the cheeky Rooster Hannigan played by John Steel and the sweet yet sassy Lily St Regis played by Anna McCaskill. Both Anna and John worked well together and had the audience in the palm of their hands with comical characters and

lively musical numbers. The number "Easy Street" was well received by the audience. Completing the principal line up was Abby Bone as Mrs Greer, Sarah Smillie as Star To Be and the multi-tasking David MacKenzie who portrayed not one, but four different characters throughout. Praise must be given to David for taking on this task and succeeding exceptionally well. As this was a junior version it was exciting to see the cast all aged 16 or under tackle the roles of children and adults so compellingly and I would commend them for that. With energetic dances, impressive principal and ensemble singing, resolute characterisation, and swift set changes a huge well done should be given to the production team of Aly, Cat, Hazel and the entire crew.

Kilmarnock Amateur Operatic Society: The Full Monty

Director: Liz Daniels; Musical Director: Tom Daniels; Choreographer: Gwyenth Grant

Well it's not every Friday evening you get to watch a group of talented guys doing *The Full Monty*! Daniel and I were very excited to see our first KAOS show and with warm welcomes from club Secretary Robin and Director Liz, it was a lovely visit. This musical comedy was true to its word, with lovely poignant moments scattered throughout. The show starts with the ladies ensemble out celebrating ladies' night to see professional stripper Keno (Gary Fyfe). Gary gave a confident performance, showcasing his dance moves, as well as a few other things, during his striptease which left the audience desperate for more. This set the level of high energy for the show and was the perfect way to start our story. The rest of the story, similar to the hit film, follows a group of unemployed steel mill workers, and their families, as they try their hand at becoming Buffalo's very own Chippendales. The first two characters we meet, who start the idea of a self-made strip group 'Hot Metal', are the cheeky-chappy, confident Jerry (Colin McDonald) and lovable, comedic Dave (Graeme Strawthorn). Jerry and Dave's friendship was captured well by Colin and Graeme, allowing the audience to will their plan to fruition. The opposite characters to Jerry and Dave are Jerry's ex-wife Pam and Dave's wife Georgie. The calm and self-assured Pam was captured well by Rachel Howat, whose scenes with Colin as Jerry and Callum Grant as their son Nathan were poised and well delivered. In contrast to the calmness of Pam is the colourful Georgie (Cassidy Murray). Cassidy's performance was strong and it was lovely to see the change in her flamboyant character around the girls and Pam to the softer side in the scenes with Dave. As the story progresses we are introduced to the remaining members of 'Hot Metal' and get a glimpse into their back stories. First is the nervous and introverted Malcolm (Calum Peter). His featured solo "You Walk with Me" was lovely and showed another level to the comedy character he committed to throughout. Calum taking his top off was also well received by the audience! Next we meet Harold (David Fyfe) who spends his time looking for work whilst pretending to his glamorous wife Vicki (Pauline Ferguson) that everything is fine. The development of David and Pauline's relationship was lovely to watch and both delivered great performances. The introduction scene of Ethan (Alan Ward) left many of the audience around us quite excited and flustered with him standing, back to the audience and baring all to showcase his contribution to the group. Alan used his comic timing to build Ethan's character and the scenes with him and Calum as Malcolm were lovely. Horse (Douglas Wardrop) is the last addition to the group and Douglas's take on 'A Big Scottish Man' was hilarious, especially watching him highland flinging all over the stage, kilt on, in his solo number. The constant light relief was provided by hippy piano player Jeanette (Colette Dunsmore). Colette delivered a comical characterisation especially in her solo "Jeanette's Showbiz Number" which made a wonderful opening to Act II. The cast was completed with lots of minor principal characters played by a talented ensemble with highlight performances from Megan Pattie as Estelle and Mark McLaughlin as Teddy. The show climaxes with a very well-choreographed final number "Let It Go", which the guys certainly did as Colin, Graeme, David, Calum, Alan and Douglas bravely thrilled the entire sold out Friday night audience by going *The Full Monty*! Well done to the whole club on a very lively show; we have the charity calendar hung in the study so will remember you all until the next show visit!

Largs Amateur Operatic Society: Jesus Christ Superstar

Director & Choreographer: Irene Cameron; Musical Director: David Edwards

It was exciting to see Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Barrfields Theatre in Largs. And a little more appropriate as it was Good Friday. The staging was very clever, with the band on stage, on top of a steel structure and a cross shaped ramp providing a simple set, with a clear message of what show we were about to see, and was used exceptionally well by the cast and crew. The musical which is mostly sung focuses on the Gospel accounts of the last week of Jesus' life starting with the preparation for his arrival in Jerusalem and climaxing with the Crucifixion.

A big part of the plot focuses on Judas, his inner struggle with his relationship with Jesus and the concern about the direction Jesus and the disciples are going. Taking on the two main demanding roles of Jesus and Judas were Jordan Benacci and Andy Park respectively. Both gave strong confident characterisations, which, teamed with impressive and consistent vocals throughout, bared the emotion behind each word they sang. For Andy the very moving number “Judas’s Death” culminating in a clever stage of Judas taking his own life was fantastic. It also left me and a lot of the audience gasping with the realness of the moment Andy threw himself off the staging to hang. Credit must also be given to the stage crew for this technical success. With Jordan featuring in most of the vocal numbers, the stamina he sustained was magnificent, and the Crucifixion scene itself left the auditorium silent as he stood on the cross. Again congrats to the crew for this staging, and to Jordan for having the trust with the set to perform this challenging emotive scene. Providing a soft edge to the show in contrast to the two leading male characters was Sarah Dillon as Mary Magdalene. Sarah’s gentle characterisation was excellent and, teamed with controlled and soft vocals, complimented the rock numbers well. With spirited performances from the other principals – Pilate (David Cameron), Peter (Calum McVittie), Simon (Allan Penders), Caiaphas (Alasdair Black), Annas (John Scott) and The Priests (Hugh Douglas and Frazer MacPhail) – the male leading cast was almost complete. Well, apart from the hilarious David McGarvey as Herod, who in his one number brought excitement, humour and charisma to the show. The Soul Girls (Laura Newton, Jacqui Park, Star Penders and Morag Robertson) led the outstanding ensemble as they featured throughout in various characters to bring the main chorus songs to life. A huge well done to Musical Director David for the excellent vocals, harmonies and music throughout. All the movement was very keeping with the numbers, whether serious or fun and recognition to Director Irene for this. It successfully felt like one solid piece of theatre. Congratulations to the entire club for this production.

St. Paul’s Church Dramatic Society (Junior Section): The Wizard of Oz

Director: Leah Smith; Musical Director: Linda Rae; Choreographer: Donna Cunningham

A small cast of fifteen made up the full ensemble for St. Paul’s Junior Section’s latest production of *The Wizard of Oz*. The show was led by Lucy Blair as a charming and convincing Dorothy who used her great stage presence to keep the audience focused on her journey from Kansas to Oz. Lucy’s singing was lovely, especially in the renowned “Somewhere Over The Rainbow”. Chloe Malcolm as The Sorceress of the North and Ailsa Carrigan as the Wicked Witch of the West both added magic to the story bringing the well recognised characters to life. Ailsa’s accent, comedy and delivery in particular were excellent. On her trip along the yellow brick road it was great to watch Dorothy meeting her three friends. First Jenna Cartwright as the Scarecrow: Jenna kept in character exceptionally from the minute she stepped on stage and throughout, fully committed to the role. Kelsey Sherlock as the Tin Man gave a solid performance with strong vocals and Jamie Young showed fantastic comic timing as the Lion. All three lit up the stage each time they appeared and their solo numbers were a delight. They were supported by an enthusiastic ensemble making up the rest of the supporting roles, members of the Lullaby League, Lollipop Guild, Jitter Bugs and people of Oz; each person was full of enthusiasm and smiled their way through the production. The music number “The Jitterbug”, a personal favourite, was another key highlight. The small venue of the Kilbarchan Performing Arts Centre could have proved a challenge for the production team. However with Linda effectively leading the cast and pianist Stewart from the balcony, Donna using the space of the small stage area to its full for the grand dance numbers and Leah using clever direction and staging along with projected back drops to set the scene, the production team made the venue work for them successfully. Congratulations to the full cast, production team and all behind the scene helpers on a great production.

**REVIEWS
DISTRICT 5 (Lanarkshire)**

Airdrie Arts Guild Drama Group: Shanghaied and Gone But Not Forgotten

Director: Ronnie Mackie

This was certainly a show of two halves with two one act plays. *Shanghaied* by Liz Lochhead is set around four children at the start of the second world war, three of whom were evacuated from working class Clydebank and sent to live in the remote and rural Castle Douglas. The evacuees featured Eddie Gouther and Morag Donald as brother and sister Billy and Morag, with Peter Paterson as Hughie who joined a lonely Emily played by May Wakely to live with her and her family. As adults, all

four actors brilliantly portrayed the characters of the young people as they bonded and built relationships sharing stories and experiences in their own words as they saw things through their own eyes at that time. Contrasting, *Gone but Not Forgotten* by James Cameron Morton featured a family in a Glasgow tenement coming together to pay their last respects to an unfaithful, womanising, pigeon fancying husband and father. As they gathered around the coffin, in playing the mother, Giovanna Tweedie did not hide her true feelings of being glad to see the back of her husband, doing everything she could to give him the send-off he would not have wanted. Ali Donald and Colin Archibald played feuding sons Peter and Jim with Nicola Young and Nicole Cowan as the more naive daughters Agnes and Cissie. Bill McCloy was suitably cast as the Presbyterian minister in attendance with Mark Andrews as Uncle Davie, the drunken brother of the deceased. Adding to the fun, Lorraine Keenan arrived at the house unexpectedly as the 'fancy woman' Sally, stopping at nothing to pay her own respects to the deceased in the coffin. A truly hilarious play with an unexpected twist at the end as the drunken husband and father enters the room (Ronnie Mackie) leaving us to wonder who is in the coffin? Two great plays performed extremely well by the company. Well done!

Airdrie and Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society: The Wedding Singer

Director: Thomas Gemmell; Musical Director: Ross Angus; Choreographer: Lisa Kennedy

Set in the 1980s, Robbie Hart is *The Wedding Singer* about to be married to his long term girlfriend Linda, but she dumps him at the altar as she wants to be the wife of a rock star, not a wedding singer. The romantic comedy has many twists and as we have come to expect, boy meets girl and everyone ends up with the correct partner in the end. As Robbie, Steven Struthers excelled in all aspects that the title role demanded as the hopeless romantic who falls in love with the sweet-natured waitress Julia, ably portrayed by Kathryn Heron, after getting his heart broken by his terrifying ex girlfriend Linda, brilliantly played by Laura Shepherd, supported by Eilish Brand who ably played the part of her friend Holly. Craig Carter provided an excellent performance as Glen Guglia, the money-mad womanizing cheating boyfriend of Julia. Robbie's band mates also gave sterling performances, brilliantly played by Dale Crombie as Sammy and the hilarious Ross McGhee who gave a sassy and camp performance as George. Katie Angus provided an entertaining performance in her characterisation of Grandma Rose. The rest of the cast provided strong performances through acting, sharp choreography and singing through strong choral numbers. On this the last night there was even a 'live' proposal of marriage on stage just after the bows – congratulation Kathryn! Perhaps not the best known show but this company certainly did it justice!

Carlisle Amateur Operatic Society: All Shook Up

Director: Eleanor Mackay; Musical Director: Ian G Monteith-Mathie; Choreographer: Paula McGilvray

Despite the 'Beast from the East', impacting on performances at the start of the week, the Society picked itself up, dusted itself down and delivered a fabulous production. From principals down to chorus members there was not a weak link on the stage. In this his first leading part in a musical, Patrick Rafferty excelled as the hip-swivelling, guitar-playing roustabout Chad. Being instantly smitten to win Chad's attention, Megan Daly provided an impressive performance as Natalie Haller with Gerry Jamieson appropriately cast as her Dad, Jim. Derrick Pearce brilliantly characterised the part of Dennis with a great accent and Lorraine Keenan absolutely nailed the part of Sylvia to perfection. Eileen Clifford was well cast as Mayor Matilda responsible for passing laws to ban 'excitement' and Kim McCluskie provided a great performance as Miss Sandra with other great performances from Ashley Stewart (Lorraine), Todd Forrest (Dean) and Colin McKinley (Sheriff Earl). Choreography was slick and solos, ensembles and choral work were of the highest standard throughout. In particular the beautiful choral presentation of "I Can't Help Falling In Love" which closed Act I and also in the numbers "There's Always Me" (Sylvia), "If I Can Dream" (Chad, Lorraine, Dean, Hyde and ensemble) and "Fools Fall In Love" (Natalie and company). Given the unfortunate set-backs the Society experienced, this show was certainly worth the wait!

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Cumbernauld Musical Theatre Society: Little Shop Of Horrors

Director: Fraser Morrison; Musical Director: Ronan Corkey; Choreographer: Kirstin Stewart

Musical theatre returned to Cumbernauld after an absence of 30 years through the establishment of this new theatre company under the direction of Fraser Morrison. In this their first full-scale musical, we were presented with a troupe of local talented and skilful performers in this horror, comedy, rock musical. Ben McGuinness provided an impressive performance as the shy, meek and dejected flower shop assistant Seymour who had a crush on Audrey the romantic, ditsy and abused shop flower arranger brilliantly characterised by Gillian Gray, who sang beautifully "Somewhere That's Green" with great expression. As the Jewish owner of the failing flower shop, Andrew Davidson provided an excellent Mr Mushnik. Stewart Robertson provided a first rate performance as Orin the sadistic evil Dentist and abusive boyfriend of Audrey, brilliantly holding the audience as he performed "The Dentist" number with Kirsty Gardiner, Christine Duncan and Kiera McQuade whose voices blended well as Chiffon, Crystal and Ronnette. Andrew Cheek provided great vocals as the voice of Audrey II, the unusual plant with a potty mouth, and an unquenchable thirst for human blood. The remaining principals provided the necessary support throughout often helping scene changes whilst remaining in character. With the audience seated around the stage, the company made full use of the various points of entry and exits, fully engaging with the audience and bringing them into the story. I welcome the company to District 5 and look forward to your next production!

Dalziel High School FP Easter Egg Club: A Night to Remember

Directors: Jennifer Craig, Jennifer Greenhill; Musical Director: Allan Black;
Choreographer: Heather Black; Assistant Choreographer: Andrea Crawford

The company's decision to move from the theatre to perform in cabaret style in the Concert Hall proved to be a great choice. From the outset we were in the safe hands of compère Moyra Scott who provided humour through her story telling and who also navigated us through the extensive and varied programme. Although difficult to single out particular soloists and solo numbers, Laura Neilson, Erin Casey, Eileen Casey, Lorraine Donnelly, Julie Little, Jennifer Finnie, Jennifer Greenhill, Fiona Shaw and Heather Black all performed well. However, Jennifer Greenhill's solo arrangement – "Jen Goes Loopy", loosely based on the number "Roar", brought the house down. Alastair Black, William Gwynne and John Neilson provided great entertainment as 'council employees' in their sketch "Let's Recycle" and in singing their voices blended extremely well in particular in "Westering Home" a cappella and also when they joined the female chorus. Overall, singing was strong and confident throughout and the harmonies blended beautifully. In celebrating 25 years as Musical Director, Allan Black must be commended for his choral and band arrangements with particular highlights this year being the "Beatles and Stones Mash", "Bridge Over The Rainbow", "Man in the Mirror" and the "Carole King Medley". Special mention must be made to the musical number Allan wrote himself for the company, "What You Gave to Me" which was delightfully sung by Kay Barr, Alison Black, Anne Black, Andrea Crawford, Jennifer Finnie, Anne Holmes, Moyra Scott and Lindsay Thomson. The show was well dressed and the scenery, designed and built by the men of the company, was of the usual standard we have come to expect. All in all, it was indeed a night to remember!

East Kilbride Amateur Musicals Society: The Wizard of Oz

Director: Alan C Jones; Musical Director: Lynne Fyfe; Choreographer: Sarah Booth

No one can dispute that *The Wizard of Oz* is a classic American fantasy adventure. The story based on L. Frank Baum's novel is legendary with unforgettable songs and familiar characters we have grown up to know and love. Anna Costello showcased her fabulous singing voice with great diction in the demanding role as Dorothy and should be commended for her handling of Toto with such care and attention throughout her performance. Jean Hutchinson provided a graceful Glinda contrasting well with Anne-Marie Simpson who was perfect as the sinister Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch of the West. Robert Kirkham provided a fairly agile performance as the Scarecrow and worked well with Gordon Muir who gave a brilliant interpretation as the cowardly Lion and David Legge who made a fine Tin Man. Alan Orr was suitably well cast as Professor Marvel/The Wizard of Oz and Campbell McDougal gave an amusing performance as the City Guard. However, I should not forget Sparky, a cute, adorable and well behaved Yorkshire terrier cast as Toto which added to my enjoyment. The remaining company together with the children as Munchkins performed well through their drama, movement and singing with great confidence as they skipped along on the yellow brick road on their magical journey to the land of Oz.

Lanark Amateur Musical Society: Anything Goes

Director: David Dickman; Musical Director: Raymond Tulips; Choreographer: Jane Masters

I am always impressed with the wealth of talent within LAMS both on and off stage. *Anything Goes* not only has an entertaining story with great characters but the music of Cole Porter provides an added bonus. Clare Foster made a perfect Reno Sweeney, displaying all the necessary dancing and singing abilities and played well next to Alan McIntyre who carried off the part of Billy Crocker with great ease. After an absence of a couple of years it was great to see Susan Andrews back on the stage elegantly playing debutante Hope Harcourt. Jamie McCaw provided a highly amusing performance as Lord Evelyn Oakleigh in particular in the numbers "Gypsy In Me" and again in the Argentine Tango brilliantly performed with Reno. Mark Kent made a fine hapless but lovable Moonface Martin and similarly was Andrew Welsh as the goggle-eyed tycoon Elisha Whitney. Vikki McIntyre provided a polished performance as Erma, maintaining a broad New York accent throughout and Paige Hughes was appropriately cast as Evangeline, mother of Hope. The remaining company performed to a high standard and it was particularly nice to see Primilia Gilmour returning from retirement to play a small cameo role! The routines involving the entire company in "Anything Goes" and "Blow Gabriel" were well staged through singing and choreography. This production skipped along nicely and with good pace, providing a great evening's entertainment.

Monklands Light Opera Youth: Disney's High School Musical Junior

Director: Steph O'Raw; Musical Director: Patrick McClair; Choreographer: Carrie Orr

Since presenting their first production *Hairspray Junior* last year, Monklands Light Opera held their youth section together with a number of planned events and it was great to see the youth section returning with over forty on stage and performing to full audiences in this much larger venue. MLO Youth brought *High School Musical Junior* to life on the stage with brilliant performances provided by Calum McGonigle (Troy), Eva Caldwell (Gabriella), Jenna Grabiec (Sharpay), Alex Jack Johnstone (Ryan), Ben MacPherson (Chad), Morgan Porter (Taylor), Amy O'Byrne (Kelsi), Taylor Crichton (Zeke), Cameron Ranking (Coach Bolton) and Amy Burton (Ms Darbus). *High School Musical* is all about teamwork and unfortunately I cannot name every person who had a part in the show individually but it was abundantly clear throughout they were "All In this Together"! The company looked perfectly at home in the Town Hall maximising every inch on stage and, on occasions, in front of the stage. Musical numbers were performed in harmony and delivered with great conviction. Choreography had been well rehearsed in particular "Get Cha Head in the Game" and "Bop to the Top". I particularly liked the megamix used for the bows which provided every cast member with the opportunity to get the recognition that they each truly deserved in their contribution to what was a wonderful show.

Shotts St Patrick's Amateur Opera Group: Disney's Beauty and the Beast Jnr

Director & Choreographer: Matthew Coulter;

Assistant Director & Assistant Choreographer: Darren Strang; Musical Director : Fraser Wilson;

Assistant Musical Director: Rachael Totten

In telling this "tale as old as time with song as old as rhyme", I had to remind myself of the age profile of all those on stage performing this timeless Disney classic. Robyn Burns (10) and Zach Aitchison (10) were very well matched in portraying 'Beauty' and 'The Beast' with both displaying great singing voices and a flair for drama. Jack Stewart (14) gave a strong performance as Maurice as did Joe McAdam (13) who played Gaston. Logan Byrne maximised every comedic opportunity in portraying the character Lefou, with Ewan Nelson playing Cogsworth; Joshua Cullen, Lumière; Cerys Moore, Babette; Reece Nelson, Monsieur D'Arque; Morgan O'Hare, Mrs Potts with Keir Macauley as her cute son Chip. Katie McCrum displayed an impressive soprano voice as Madame de la Grande Bouche and Emily Allen, Alyssa Brennan, Aimee Moore and Olivia Semple completed the principal line-up as the Silly Girls. Regardless if a principal or a member of the chorus, this junior section excelled in all aspects of performance bringing the story alive. Stage direction and choreography had been well drilled with the singing being of a very high standard. It is about teamwork in this group and members of the adult company designed and assembled the impressive stage set which featured the Castle terrace blending perfectly with other backdrops used. Without vision, inspiring leadership, commitment and dedication none of this is possible and I must praise the production team and those who coached and mentored the young people in their achievement. Well done to one and all!

Ups and Downs Theatre Group: Take 23

Directors: Nicole Brown, Alison Adam; Musical Director: Stuart Park

This enthusiastic group of entertainers took to the stage in their 23rd year with the show built around themes including transport; nonsense words; sun, moon & stars and a trip to the movies. The company performed well collectively and in groups with some highlights including "On a Bicycle Built for Two"; "The Trolley Song"; "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang"; the rhythmic "Ob-La-Di- Ob-La Da"; "Do Wah Diddy" and "I See a Boat on a River" – in particular Susan Bowden's solo part. Ellis Leggatt provided a first-rate performance singing "Sailing" equalled by Liam Hughes and Hannah Quinn in "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious". Martin Russell provided groovy moves in dancing to "Blame it on the Boogie". Joanne Toner was on usual form with an excellent rendition of "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me", and later in the show displayed her unique flair for delivering comedy in her characterisation as Miss Hannigan. Judith Abubaker gave an exceptional performance singing "Tomorrow" and Alistair McIntosh brought the house down with "Everything I Do". Rachel Murphy also provided a beautiful rendition of "I Will Always Love You". The show was brightly costumed enhanced with lighting effects. It is difficult to capture all elements of variety shows such as this and name each performer individually. However, I am sure all associated with this production will be pleased with the end result.



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REVIEWS
DISTRICT 6 (Edinburgh Area)

Bohemians Lyric Opera Company: Footloose

Director: Malcolm Burnett; Musical Director: Finlay Turnbull; Choreographer: Dominic Lewis

Set in Bomont, a small town in the deep south, this musical tells of the struggle one man, Rev Shaw Moore, has in coming to terms with the tragic death of his son and his friends as they drive home from a dance supposedly having been drinking and taking drugs. As a result he bans dancing and any kind of enjoyment in the hope of protecting the youngsters in his parish from a similar fate. Along comes Ren McCormack and his mum Ethel from Chicago to this town in the middle of nowhere to live with his aunt and uncle. Ren cannot understand or accept the prohibitions and sets out to change everything so that young people can have fun. Rev Moore (Christopher Cameron) was most convincing as the grieving, protective preacher. His turmoil evident in "Heaven Help Me". His wife Vi (Cathy Geddie) gave an excellent performance as she struggled with her own emotions and split loyalties between her husband and somewhat rebellious daughter Ariel. One of the most moving scenes for me was when Vi tries to get her husband to understand that she too is grieving. "He was my son too" was a line which hit home hard as did the stunning "Can You Find It In Your Heart?" Ariel (Felicity Thomas) displayed the behaviour of a typical teenager wanting to break loose and experience life and certainly belted out "Holding On For A Hero" along with her most believable buddies – Rusty (Charlotte Jones), Wendy Jo (Jo Heinemeier), and Urleen (Sophie Harper). This quartet complemented each other, displaying typical behaviour of a group of teenage girls and blended well vocally especially in "Somebody's Eyes". Rusty's great voice was well shown off as she led the company in "Let's Hear It For The Boy", a cracking number. Ren (Ross MacPherson) gave another commendable performance. A flexible gymnast, an energetic dancer, strong vocalist and charismatic player, it was no wonder Ariel fell for him instead of rough and ready bad boy Chuck (Andrew Knox) who also came across well. Another vocal highlight for me was "Learning To Be Silent", sung by Vi, Ariel and Ethel (Ciara McBrien), each conveying the heartache they felt. Although *Footloose* is based on a fairly dark theme, the characters succeeded in balancing the seriousness of the plot with fun, especially Willard (Thomas McFarlane). With his slow, drawn out delivery of lines, comic timing and expressive face he typified the perception of a slow witted deep south character. "Mama Says" with Willard and a small male ensemble was so much fun. As well as having such a strong principal line up the entire company is to be congratulated on excellent vocal ensemble singing and first class choreography. The big production numbers were most impressive. With such a large cast it would have been easy to try to hide but everybody appeared to be confident and precise in the slick, polished choreography. There certainly didn't seem to be any 'loose feet.' This was altogether a very commendable production. One of those shows where I was exhausted just watching the energetic action on stage. My only slight criticism was issues with the sound balance on the night I was there. It was sometimes very difficult to pick up the dialogue and lyrics but hopefully that was put right. This was a most enjoyable production which certainly did rock.

Dunbar Lyric Group: Evita

Directors: Gordon Roberts, Diane Kerr; Musical Director: Douglas Kerr;
Choreographer: Margaret Thom

I have great admiration for this small company who took up the challenge of presenting such a difficult, dramatic piece of musical theatre celebrating the 40th anniversary of *Evita's* West End debut. Their venue, the Strawberry Barn, has no stage but this was cleverly built to form four sides of a rectangle with the orchestra positioned in the space in the middle. This worked extremely well and was used creatively. Excellent use of back projection changed the many scenes and was enhanced by effective lighting. The score for *Evita* is incredibly complex and was handled admirably by the cast and a very competent, well controlled orchestra. With virtually no dialogue the success of the show depends greatly on having three strong leads and the company was most fortunate in having a Chè, Eva and Peron who were most impressive in their roles. Chè (Paul Lyall) is rarely off the stage and he immediately engaged with the audience in his opening "Oh What A Circus". With a fabulous voice and dynamic personality he guided us through the story perfectly. "High Flying Adored" was a show stopper. The role of Eva is immense. Martine McCluskie is to be congratulated on the way she interpreted this most demanding part. She had a real understanding of the character portraying the ambitious, manipulative and often vulnerable sides of Eva Peron as she journeys through her short life. Her seductive side came across well in *I'd Be Surprisingly Good For You* and contrasted with the

memorable *Don't Cry For Me Argentina* where she lived the moment with the crowd chanting adorations around her – and what a fabulous dress! Her final broadcast and “Montage” lying on the floor exuded emotion and had the audience captivated. Peron (Alasdair Morrison) was a very believable character who conveyed his feelings for Eva admirably and had a wonderful bass voice. His Mistress (Carly McCart) gave a thoroughly engaging performance “Another Suitcase in Another Hall” expressing her heartache. Eva’s first lover Magaldi (Hugh Pumphrey) brought a little light heartedness in “On This Night of a Thousand Stars. The small ensemble of 14 adults and 8 children did a fine job as the crowd expressing their grief in the opening requiem and final scene and their adoration of Evita and joy in “A New Argentina”. Young Kirsten Irwin sang sweetly and confidently and has the potential to be a star of the future. This was a highly emotive production with many memorable and tear jerking moments. This very ambitious choice of show was well directed and neatly staged, resulting in a most enjoyable production which was well received by the audience. Very well done indeed, Dunbar Lyric. You should be very proud of your achievement.

Edinburgh Gibert & Sullivan Society: HMS Pinafore

Director: Alan Borthwick; Musical Director: David Lyle

Once again this was a first class production from EDGAS with a strong cast of principal characters supported by an excellent well balanced chorus. This was a fairly traditional production but the added ‘Borthwick gimmicks’ always bring a freshness and originality to his productions. The spotlight on some of the main characters through a gauze and the remote controlled ship crossing the stage during the overture was a neat touch. A most striking set on the quarter-deck of HMS Pinafore with a crew of 22 raucous sailors on board going about their various chores and in great voice made an immediate impact. The operetta pokes fun at the British class system and Captain Corcoran (Michael McFarlane) commanded his role in true upper crust fashion. He is hoping to marry off his daughter Josephine to the Rt Hon Sir Joseph Porter but alas Josephine has fallen for Ralph Rackstraw, a humble sailor on board the ship. As always Josephine (Gillian Robertson) gave an impressive performance with her effortless singing voice. Her aria in Act II when she weighs up the pros and cons of marrying for love or money was wonderful. Ralph (Chris Cotter) her lovelorn suitor was a real down to earth, salt of the earth character determined to win his bride, and gained the audience sympathy with his opening solo declaring his hopeless love for Josephine. The rather repulsive, Dick Deadeye who is abhorred by the crew was very well portrayed by Justin Skelton who revelled in trying to win over the Captain in “Kind Captain I’ve Important Information”. Buttercup (Annabel Hamid) was more youthful than some I have seen but she interpreted the character ably. The mystical “A Many Years Ago” complete with a crystal ball which changed colour was innovative and amusing. Bill Bobstay (Andrew Crawford) has a resounding bass voice and when joined by Bob Becket (Nathan Dicks) and Ralph produced a memorable “A British Tar”. I also enjoyed the somewhat humorous “He Is An Englishman” with its various hats, flags and even a sneaky saltire depicting what might have been. When Sir Joseph arrives on board he is accompanied by his entourage of sisters, cousins and aunts looking quite affluent but led by Cousin Hebe (Jennifer Murray) were not afraid to flirt with the lowly tars. Sir Joseph (Simon Boothroyd) gave a most accomplished performance with articulate dialogue, an expressive face and strong singing voice. The trio “Never Mind The Why And Wherefore with its many encores and gimmicks – bells ringing, phone a friend, Strictly judging panel – and a frolicking Sir Joseph was one of the evening’s highlights and I imagine left Sir Joseph rather exhausted! There was some superb lighting throughout. The moonlit opening of Act II was especially effective and created a most sentimental atmosphere for the very well sung “Fair Moon To Thee I Sing”. This was indeed a most professional, well directed production with superb choral singing from a well disciplined chorus, a fine orchestra and staging which presented some most picturesque groupings .A first class production which was a real pleasure to attend.

Edinburgh Music Theatre: Guys and Dolls

Director: Louise Sables; Musical Directors: Matthew Brown, Simon Lowe; Choreographer: Bekki Black

Guys and Dolls with its wonderful music and many varied characters is a show I never tire of. The eye-catching, lively opening Broadway scene buzzing with activity from various street performers and passers-by created the atmosphere for this ever popular musical. This was a very well cast show with a strong line up of principal characters and an ensemble who were well directed and choreographed from the start. “Fugue For Tinorns” isn’t the easiest of numbers but this was extremely well executed by Nicely-Nicely Johnson (Tony Jackson), Benny (Fraser Shand) and Rusty (Michael Poon), three of a very believable group of diverse gangsters. Naomi Barkley was a suitably demure, naive Sarah

Brown who along with her group of mission dolls does her utmost to try to recruit and convert sinners. With a lovely, clear soprano voice she was well matched vocally to Sky Masterson (Alex Cantor), their duet "I've Never Been In Love Before" convincingly romantic. Alex commanded the stage as the somewhat aloof, arrogant Sky leading, the nimble footed gangsters in an impressive "Crapshooters' Ballet" and "Luck Be A Lady". Miss Adelaide is a gem of a part and Kirsten Adamson gave a superb, engaging, sparkling performance. She never missed a chance to bring out the subtle humour, "Adelaide's Lament" never overplayed but performed with a natural professionalism. She had a wonderful rapport with Nathan Detroit (Colin Richardson), the perfect, lovable rogue trying to conceal his gambling addiction from Adelaide with whom he has never quite made it to the altar. Their scene when Adelaide confesses the tales she has been telling her mother about their relationship and Nathan's reactions were most amusing. I did sympathise with him in "Sue Me". The contrast in characters between Sarah and Adelaide came across very well indeed so that the realisation that they did have something in common in "Marry The Man Today" was well played. All of the other supporting characters gave meaningful performances. Big Jule (Steve Griffin) with his drole, gruff voice and Harry the Horse (Andrew Todman) completed the motley crew of gangsters while Lt Brannigan (Bob Bowden), a Columbo type cop, did his best to sort them all out. The Hot Box Girls in their stunning costumes performed an energetic "A Bushel and a Peck" and were in great form opening Act II with a glitzy "Take Back Your Mink". There are some big musical numbers in this show and these were all sung confidently and with great enthusiasm. "Sit Down You're Rockin' The Boat", ably led by Nathan was an extremely well thought out "dream sequence". I haven't seen this number moved so much before but the choreography here worked particularly well with slick movement creating the various images in Nathan's dream. Very good indeed. With so much hustle and bustle on stage, it was good to hear a most touching rendition of "More I Cannot Wish You" sung by Arvide (Scott Kenneway) whose scene with Sarah was warm and sincere. Jill Grimmond characterised the austere somewhat cold General Cartwright but managed to convey her soft almost flirtatious side when she came face to face with the gangsters in the mission. Scenery, lighting, props and costumes all enhanced the production. The sound was well balanced so that the wit in this musical was never missed. A well disciplined orchestra although brassy never overwhelmed the singers. This was altogether a most enjoyable production with a real feel good factor which certainly had the audience leaving the theatre singing. Well done, guys and dolls.

Encore: Thoroughly Modern Millie

Director & Musical Director: Peter Antonelli; Choreographer: Heather Antonelli

Millie Dillmount, a small town girl, moves to New York to fulfil her ambition of marrying not for love but for money and a lifestyle she has always dreamed of. Along the way she discovers the undercover kidnapping of young orphan girls and her plan is disrupted when she meets the seemingly less than affluent Jimmy. Millie is a fairly challenging role but this was in the most capable hands of Alison Henry who gave a bold, animated characterisation. With a most versatile singing voice she punched out "Not For The Life Of Me" and the title song whilst "Jimmy" was soft and captivating and "Gimme Gimme" powerful and strong. Millie is living in the Hotel Priscilla where we meet the manipulative Mrs. Meers (Hazel Gray) and the comedy duo Bun Foo (Alan Taylor) and Ching Ho (Steve McDonald). These are not easy parts to play and Hazel did extremely well with her changing portrayal and accents from American to Chinese whilst Alan and Steve are to be congratulated on learning Chinese! Millie finds employment in the Sincere Trust Insurance Company and it is here she meets and sets her sights on Mr Graydon (Ian McKenna), the wealthy boss who gave an impressive patter song in "The Speed Test". This was an excellent scene introducing Miss Flannigan (Anne Henry) who left us in no doubt as to who controlled the office workers whose foot tapping to sound like typing was most plausible. Miss Dorothy is a somewhat sophisticated character who is trying to find out how the other half live and Gillian Hunter brought a real elegance to the part, With a lovely singing voice she blended well with Millie in "How The Other Half Lives". Kevin MacConnachie gave a most credible performance as Jimmy who has fallen for Millie and I did enjoy his romantic, controlled rendition of "What Do I Need With Love?" Of course this so called romantic plot is full of mix ups and by the start of Act II it's Mr. Graydon and Dorothy who are attracted to each other. The opening scene of this act was particularly well done, Miss Flannigan playing a great cameo role convincing Millie to "Forget About The Boy". The melodramatic "Ah Sweet Mystery Of Life" / "I'm Falling In Love With Someone" completely sent up was delivered with panache. Heather Antonelli made a wonderful job playing the affluent jazz singer Muzzy. With a powerful voice and great stage presence she delivered both her numbers with real style and conviction. This group of principal characters was very well supported by The Priscilla Girls, Ruth (Megan Rourke), Gloria (Becky Duncan-Skelton), Alice (Rebecca Kinross)

and Lucille (Kirsty Sandilands), a lively chorus of flappers and dancers who all played their part in bringing the show together. The many scene changes were unobtrusive and flowed seamlessly. The 1920s costumes were extremely vibrant, I did like the red and black stenographers' outfits, and there were some stunning, glitzy and glamorous evening dresses. This was a most entertaining production which was lively and musically sound. A grand way to celebrate 25years of Encore. Congratulations!

Forth Dimension Musical Productions: 2018 Concert

Directors: Andrew Findlater, Caty Kerr

Firstly I must give credit to the new, young directors who compiled a selection of fairly modern musical numbers resulting in a most vibrant, interesting and varied programme. The small cast of twelve junior and eight adult members knew how to work an audience and with a punchy opening number "Forget You" soon had the audience clapping along and very much on their side. The junior chorus performed a confident "Love is Easy" giving the opportunity for four of the group to sing solo lines. In fact throughout the evening nearly everyone on stage had a chance to sing a couple of solo lines so that this was a real team effort. Cameron Aitchison changed the tempo with his soothing, relaxed "Last Request" for voice and guitar and was followed by the full chorus "Give A Little Bit" with very good vocal arrangements and guitar accompaniment. "Need You Now" sung by Joanne Hogg and Caty Kerr whose voices blended well had a real Country and Western feel. The animated youngsters certainly put everything into a most lively "Bring it All Back". Rile Jordan gave an excellent performance of "Riptide". Not only does he have a great voice but he sang as if he understood and believed what he was singing about. "High Hopes" was well sung by the adult chorus with an arrangement which showed off a real blend of voices. The ladies of the company began "Shout Out To My Ex" in a somewhat demure almost heartbroken tone but by the end of the number left us in no doubt about how they felt about their ex!! A powerful "Get Lucky" had a real swing to it and concluded an impressive first half. The full chorus kicked off the second act with a rousing "We Are Golden". In this number and several others the vocal arrangements were harmonious and fresh and the company was not afraid to really sing out. Caty Kerr is an engaging performer and her singing and guitar playing in Simon and Garfunkel's "The Boxer" was a star turn. "Dignity", "Fill My Little World" and "The Sound" again portrayed the energy and enthusiasm from this group of singers. Michelle Page's strong voice was well suited to the almost blues type "One Big Family". "Uptown Funk" was a platform for three of the male chorus to let their hair down and this was a well delivered action packed all singing all dancing humorous number. "Africa" followed by "From Now On" from the recent *The Greatest Showman* once again demonstrated the strength of the full company's singing and interesting vocal arrangements. This was an evening of sheer entertainment by a company who sang with conviction; everyone on stage looking as if they were enjoying every minute. I must say that I did too. Very well done, Forth Dimension.

Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association: Calamity Jane

Director: Graeme Aitken; Musical Director: Laura Paterson; Choreographer: Lisa McLeod

Calamity Jane may be considered to be one of the 'older' shows but it certainly still has an appeal. The orchestra had barely struck up a few bars of the lively overture when the audience joined in clapping and singing along to the memorable, well known melodies. The show revolves round Calamity and Jenna Lee gave an energetic performance as the tomboyish Calamity maintaining a great pace and excellent accent throughout. She sang with great verve especially in "Windy City". The transformation from the raucous, brash Calamity to the more sentimental Calamity when she finds her more feminine side and realises that she has feelings for Bill was well done. "My Secret Love" was sung with real sincerity. Bill Hickock (Dougal Affleck) was a real match for Calamity keeping her well and truly in her place and eventually winning her affection. "Higher Than A Hawk" came over very well. Henry Miller (Bob Crawford) is expecting a beautiful actress to entertain in his saloon and he showed real frustration in trying to control the townsfolk when an unexpected Francis Fryer (Mark Belcher) turned up instead of the actress Adelaide Adams (Kit Millar). I enjoyed Mark's characterisation as the not too wimpish but rather likeable Francis with his subtle comedy. "Hive Full Of Honey" was most entertaining. There was some good interaction between himself and Susan (Claire Bayne) who made it clear that she had an eye for Francis. Calamity is sent out to sort out the confusion and appease the townsfolk and brings back Katie Brown (Claire Riddoch), Adelaide's maid, who, initially jumpy and terrified at being found out that she was an imposter, gave an assured song and dance routine in "Keep It Under Your Hat". She is delighted to win over the charming and somewhat dashing Lt Danny Gilmartin (Andrew Jack) and together were a well suited couple and

vocally well matched singing “Love You Dearly”. The other supporting principals all played their parts well. I was impressed by the general ensemble work. The impatient, none too happy townspeople displayed their displeasure forcefully when they were let down by Henry. The female chorus left us in no doubt about their feelings about “Men!” while the male chorus led by Bill were more amorous about “Adelaide”. There are some great numbers in the show and these were put over well by the company particularly, “The Black Hills Of Dakota” with its lovely harmonies and “Windy City” which went with a swing. Choreography throughout was well suited to the show and neatly executed, and the costumes were in keeping with the period. This was a well directed show both in production and musically and it was obvious that everyone on stage was enjoying themselves. The small orchestra was well controlled and supported the singers admirably. A most enjoyable production which was very well received by a capacity audience which was good to see.

Portobello and Joppa Parish Church Drama Group: Call Me Madam

Director: Charlotte Anderson; Musical Director: Nancy Kent;

Choreographers: Lynne Kelly, Karen Goddard

“Call Me Madam” is one of the older musicals rarely performed these days and yet it is such a delightful, light hearted piece brought to life by Irving Berlin’s fine melodies. Mrs. Sally Adams, a wealthy American socialite, is sent to the fictitious Lichtenburg as Ambassador. While there she causes havoc by interfering in Lichtenburg’s politics and financial affairs and develops a love interest in their Foreign Minister. Despite her various faux-pas, all ends well. Sally (Debbie Beveridge) with her strong mezzo voice and clear diction certainly knows how to deliver lines and command the stage. She was well matched to Cosmo (Kenneth Anderson), her love interest, the two making a solid pairing both vocally and dramatically. “Marrying For Love” was indeed very romantic. Sally is accompanied to Lichtenburg by her aide Kenneth (Martijn Van Waveren) who gave a most charismatic performance, conveying his love for the Princess Maria (Rachael Coatham), a most accomplished singer and dancer who looked lovely. These two juvenile leads were a convincing couple. Kenneth’s “Once Upon a Time” as he dreams of what might be was a joy to listen to as was the duet “It’s A Lovely Day Today.” The trio of senators – Wilkins (Gareth Rudd), Gallagher (Neil Bowie), and Brockbank (Willie French) – brought real humour to the production no more so than in their slick, well moved “They Like Ike”. Other supporting characters and cameo roles were well cast and very well played indeed. As well as having a very good principal line up, the ensemble work was consistently strong with clearly defined part singing. “The Ocarina” was a perfect example of this where harmonies came across loud and clear. It is always evident that every member of this company enjoys what they are doing. Each person develops an individual character getting involved and reacting to what is happening so that there is a real sense of camaraderie on stage. The choreography too was well thought out and executed with enthusiasm by the cast. A fairly simple set with minimal props all worked well and were enough to create the appropriate scenes and atmosphere intended. The orchestra in the capable hands of Nancy Kent was in great form and supported the singers well. I thought it was a lovely touch when after the final curtain Nancy announced that it was a special birthday for one of the orchestra and invited the audience to join the cast in singing “Happy Birthday”. “I Wonder Why” / “You’re Just In Love” is probably the best known number in the show and had the audience singing along during the reprise in the Finale of Act II. Once again this was a well rehearsed, beautifully costumed and most entertaining production which I enjoyed very much. Congratulations to everyone involved for your obvious commitment.

Southern Light Opera Company: Hello, Dolly!

Director: Andy Johnston; Musical Director: Crawford Moyes; Choreographer: Louise Williamson

The Southern Light Opera Company – 121 years young and still going strong! – and, by the look of tonight’s performance, the current membership and their successors will surely keep the capital supplied with foot-tapping musicals well into the next century! This was unexpectedly the opening night for *Dolly* – delayed by one day due to the atrocious weather that wreaked havoc with many shows throughout Scotland. However, no signs of opening night nerves with this company. Cumulative years of experience have taken care of that and this has, no doubt, been passed on to their newer members. Following a bright and lively overture with the orchestra in the most capable hands of MD Crawford Moyes, the opening choruses epitomised for me the Southern Light – chorus singing has always been of the highest quality, and this year was no exception. Whilst singing the praises of the chorus, I must also mention their high quality footwork, especially in the Act II trio of consecutive, choreographed numbers, under the watchful eye of Choreographer Louise Williamson.

Principals also rose to the occasion. If I may be allowed to misquote Dolly Levi (Elspeth Whyte) "Some people paint, some sew... I meddle – I also act and sing!". Elspeth's was a different take on the brash, over-the-top, frequent portrayal of the title character. Her soft-spoken, nevertheless deliberate deliveries added to the uniqueness of this production – sympathetically directed by Andy Johnston. Using Dolly Levi's stunning costumes as an example, the costuming of the show, in its entirety, was excellent. Dolly's interaction with Horace Vandergelder (Alan Hunter) also proved sound – with Alan's immaculate costuming adding to his unmissable stage presence. This musical provides an outlet for two of my favourite comedy characters – Cornelius Hackl (John Bruce) and Barnaby Tucker (Matthew O'Hagan) both of whom worked and interacted so well with each other, never throwing away a line when the next one will do! Irene Malloy (Tanya Williamson) was on excellent form, with her "Ribbons Down My Back" being one of the many "memorable moments" of the show. Ermengarde (Robyn McCormack) and Ambrose Kemper (Matt McDonagh) formed an excellent partnership with good individual characters portrayed. Minnie Faye (Nicola Dryburgh) also gave a fine performance. *Hello, Dolly!* provides opportunity for a host of minor principals all of whom have their own well defined characterisations and tonight these were all carried out with excellence! A word on the technical side. This was Scenic Projects smaller set for *Hello, Dolly!* Nevertheless it worked well on the King's stage, with no major hold-ups in the scene changes. Costumes as previously mentioned were immaculate and in period. Lighting and sound – well, I could see and hear everyone on stage, so no complaints there! Thank you so much, SLO, for inviting me over to report on your show once again, and, yet again, for not disappointing! Thank you also for the warm hospitality shown, not only to myself, but to NODA National President Nick Lawrence and Scottish Councillor Stuart McCue-Dick who were also present.

Mike Pendlowski

REVIEWS DISTRICT 7 (Fife)

Carnegie Youth Theatre: Starlight Express

Director: Colin Baird; Musical Director: Brian Beaton; Choreographer: Clare Stewart

This was my first viewing of a non-professional production of *Starlight Express*, and, I must admit that, prior to seeing the show tonight, I spent some time deliberating on how they would accomplish this tour-de-force of a musical. Knowing CYT, it wasn't the acting or the singing or the dancing that raised any doubts in my mind. It was only doing all that – on roller skates! However, with CYT's wealth of talent, they not only pulled it off, but managed to give show-stopping performances throughout! On a set comprising a couple of ramps, some raised level and a track extending off the stage and surrounding the orchestra pit, some forty-five pairs of roller skates manoeuvred themselves round and over the obstacles without any accidents in sight and only the odd grimace when the orchestra pit appeared to be getting a bit close – a bit too soon! Principal actors can easily be summarised in one word – excellent! Take as an example the two lead characters, Rusty (Guy Bathgate) and Pearl (Rachel Munro). Their characters were quite individual, yet in partnership they worked so well. This, combined with their outstanding singing abilities, set a very high standard for the whole show. Guy's version of "Starlight Express" was a pleasure to listen to, while Rachel's "He'll Whistle At Me" was presented with the professional standard that we were looking for from CYT. Electra (Adam Shaw) and his wagons gave a suitably exciting account of "AC/DC", while in one of my favourite numbers "U.N.C.O.U.P.L.E.D." Dinah (Kirsty Donaldson), Buffy (Charlie Stewart) and Duvay (Amy Melville) gave outstanding, moving performances. The one non-locomotive character – but nonetheless extremely important one – was the Voice of Control, whose attempts to keep the engines and their carriages under control was voiced with outstandingly clear diction by a diminutive, nevertheless presence-full Erica Russell – well done Erica! All other minor principals and chorus were well deserving of praise for what was very obviously a team effort! Production team of Colin Baird (Director), Brian Beaton (Musical Director) and Clare Stewart (Choreographer) must take great pride in the results of all their labours over the year. Brian explained to me how he had to encourage breathing differently from normal, since working on skates causes added problems for the singers' breathing. I agreed – (never having donned a pair of roller skates in my life – I tried to sound knowledgeable!). The work of the choreographer is difficult enough when dancers are on their feet, never mind a ball-bearing induced frenzy with feet having "minds of their own!" Costume supplier That Looks Good excelled themselves in this production – each character having a costume styled individually to their part. Lighting and sound both scored highly in my view, whilst the races all filmed using Chromakey, with backgrounds of the highways and byways of Dunfermline, were presented in

excellent definition on an upstage mounted video wall. I personally saw audience members in front of me, moving to the side to dodge lampposts whizzing past in close proximity! All in all, a brave choice for CYT, but one which has paid off! Many thanks for the invite to your show, and for sharing your time with the National President and our Scottish Committee at the post-show reception!

Carnegie Youth Theatre: On Broadway

Directors & Musical Directors: Guy Bathgate, Becky Campbell, Natasha McNamee, Freya Meikle

It is always a pleasure to receive an invite from Carnegie Youth Theatre to either their main show or indeed their Summer Concert performance. Tonight's concert *On Broadway*, as tradition dictates, was devised, directed, musically arranged & choreographed by some of the young members themselves. The programme comprised some thirty numbers from shows both well-known and not so, offering a full two hours of continuous entertainment to the usual extremely high standard. The first act played on an open stage and touched on songs from *Chicago*, *Jungle Book*, *Grease* and *Footloose* – to name but a few! Unfortunately sound problems beset a few of the numbers, but, I'm glad to say, these were in the minority. A highlight for us was "Anything You Can Do" from *Annie Get Your Gun* sung by Charlie Stewart and Luis Mutch – an excellent animated performance from both actors. Act II continued in the same vein, showcasing another fifteen musicals all of which are currently, or have been on the Broadway stages. The act opened with a well tried and tested rendition of "Bui Doi" from *Miss Saigon* and, when we were just about lulled into a false sense of security, things managed to get even more exciting! "Almost There" from *The Princess and the Frog*, sung by Amy Melville, the hit number from *Evita* "Another Suitcase in Another Hall" (Natasha McNamee), "Nothing" from *A Chorus Line* (Aoife Cook), "Waving Through A Window" from *Dear Evan Henson* (Guy Bathgate), "Diva's Lament" from *Spamalot* (Maddie Gilroy) and "Suddenly Seymour" from one of my favourite shows, *Little Shop of Horrors*, accounted for just some of the highlights of Act II. Varying levels on the set in this act added to the possibilities for direction, and these were taken at several opportunities. Lighting was fine, with cast faces seen at all times. However, I feel it necessary to mention, for the second time, the sound. Please remember that "loud" sound is not always "good" sound especially when you are trying (unnecessarily) to push it beyond the capability of the pa system, resulting in lyrics being indecipherable. This occurred on a number of occasions especially in the second act. To conclude, congratulations once again, CYT, on another excellent performance, and roll on *Sister Act* next March!

Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association (Youth): Summer Holiday

Director: Derek Walker; Musical Director: Alan Gibson; Choreographer: Jemma Guild

If you want to get the audience on your side right from the start, choose a show like *Summer Holiday*. Who didn't go home humming or singing one of Cliff Richard's memorable compositions for example "Bachelor Boy" or "The Young Ones"? Similar to many youth theatres, GAMA (Youth) hosts a wide range of experience and confidence within their membership – and this necessarily changes from year to year – it's the nature of a youth society. However those who last out two or three years with the society give of the benefits of their learning over these years. And so it was this afternoon. The four London bus mechanics, Don, Steve, Cyril and Edwin, in real life Ewan James, Alex Morrison, Lauchlan Graham, and Joel Allsopp, all successfully appeared to bond as actors as well as bonding in their characters. The male lead, Don, held his own in the many solos and duets allocated to this character. Ewan's confidence also shone when the four lads were joined by (initially) three girls – Angie, Mimsie & Alma (Eilidh Mackinlay, Mirren McLure and Erin Moodie). Again, the trio worked very well together, bringing out each individual character in turn. They are soon to be joined by "stowaway" Barbara, performed by vivacious Sarah Thomas, whose solos "Constantly" and "Living Doll" were both a joy to listen to. Barbara's very ambitious mother, Stella, was portrayed to maximum effect by Matthew Hutton, his antics bringing much deserved laughter from the capacity audience. Stella's Press Agent, Jerry (Grant Haddow) also joined in the hilarity – his facial expressions adding to the fun of his scenes with Stella. Choral numbers worked well – and, most importantly, the cast looked as if they were enjoying themselves, which is half the battle! Scene changes, of which there are several, seemed to take unduly long on the whole. This has the unfortunate effect of restricting the flow of the show. Some advice for future productions, could some attention be paid to accents? For example when parts are clearly defined as London bus mechanics, the avoidance of local accents can add significantly to the production. Many thanks for your invite to your 2018 show!

Kelty Musical Association: Jesus Christ Superstar

Director: Gary Gibb; Musical Director: Ross Hamilton; Choreographer: Lynne Gibb

Firstly, can I thank KMA for agreeing to me reviewing their show while Mike is on holiday? He will be sorry he missed one of his favourite shows. I have seen many professional productions of this show but never an amateur one. There was nothing amateur about this production. Using a minimalist set of rostra and scaffolding to provide different levels for the singers and band to work on Gary Gibb, director, ensured that all the action could be seen when all the company were on stage. The challenge for the director and Ross Hamilton, musical director, is to bring something new to a well known story and to keep the audience engaged throughout. This they did. They were ably supported by their principals. Darren Philip Johnson gave a powerful and emotional performance as Jesus along with Mia Oudeh's quiet but equally emotional performance as Mary Magdalene. Steven Smyth as Judas ensured the audience felt the struggles of his character in betraying Jesus. Unusually the part of Annas was played by a woman, Pauline McGeever. It worked. Gary Gibb's beautiful rich vocal tones in the role of Caiaphas brought a certain menace to the production. The songs from this show are well known and a particular favourite of this reviewer is "Pilate's Dream". Mark Grieve as Pontius Pilate gave the audience a brief respite from the high power, high volume singing in the first half with a lovely rendition of this song. A highlight of the second half is "King Herod's Song". Frazer McLaughlan played it for all its worth with great choreography from Lynn Gibb. Simon and Peter played by Peter Tomassi and Sean Mitchell respectively and other minor roles played by members of the company did nothing to weaken the overall performance. Judas' suicide and Jesus' crucifixion were handled well with the use of lighting to leave the audience to fill in the visuals. The band deserves particular mention with their high energy playing and once revealed at the end of the show on the top section of the rostra they were allowed to play the audience out and leave us physically and emotionally exhausted. Well done all involved.

Alison Pendlowski

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society: 9 to 5 – The Musical

Director: Carol Sinclair; Musical Director: Ronan Corkey;
Choreographers: Carol Sinclair, Barbara Barker

Based on the film with music and lyrics by Dolly Parton and libretto by Patricia Resnick, the story follows three secretaries, who, sick and tired of their boss's sexism and inappropriate behaviour, decide to kidnap him and run the company themselves with, of course, brilliant results. Keeping to the tradition of KAOS shows, the ensemble were first class both vocally and in terms of movement. Principals were no less proficient in their performances. Charlie Sinclair as Franklin Hart Jr, together with Monica Holland as Violet Newstead and Sarah Hugh as Judy Bernly, all gave performances which were a dream to watch! However, I have to show a bit of favouritism here for the two characters who really made the show for me – Anne Marie Miller as Doralee Rhodes and Kay Dickson as Roz Keith. Anne Marie's stage presence and outstanding vocal ability was only matched by Kay's comedic presence and exquisite timing on each and every appearance. As in many musicals, the cast was supported by an array of minor principals each of whom provided their own significant characterisations in the course of the show. Some of these being Clark Graham as the company president Russell Tinsworthy, Graham Ronald as Dick Bernly, and of course, Fiona Brodie as the office lush, Margaret. These and all the other minor principals added in no small way to a fine evening's entertainment. The band, under the baton of new Musical Director Ronan Corkey combined with the talented artistic direction of Carol Sinclair, definitely proved a hit with the opening night audience. Congratulations also to the fine crew of stage and props persons who coped magnificently with the extremely frequent scene changes. Well done KAOS and roll on the next show!

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society: The Pirates of Penzance

Director: Robin Ožóg; Musical Director: John Howden

Kirkcaldy G&S Society's choice of *The Pirates of Penzance* must surely rank amongst the top three or four in audiences' G&S favourites – and quite rightly so! This evening we were treated to a fine – almost exclusively traditional – production of *Pirates*. Brief mention of Gilbert & Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore* (the operetta premiered before *Pirates*) near the top of the show introduced us to a swashbuckling gents' chorus led by a lively, fine-voiced Pirate King (Ross Main). In close succession we meet Frederic the Pirate Apprentice (Nick Temperley) and Ruth a Pirate Maid of all Work (Frances Taylor). It was, first of all a pleasure to see a Frederic who was a believable twenty-one year old, and,

secondly, to listen to a character-full Ruth, whose opening number explains away some of Gilbert's contrived plot of the opera. The ladies chorus enter and, like the gents, are a credit to the Society in their ensemble singing – even taking in to account a very slight glitch in “Dry the Glistening Tear”! Our two lady minor principals Edith (Caroline Warburton) and Kate (Håle Denholm) both achieved sparkling performances before the arrival to the stage of Mabel (Jilly Martin) who has the daunting task of opening with perhaps the best known of Sullivan's soprano arias “Poor Wandering One”. This Jilly achieved with consummate ease! Next we meet Major General Stanley (Robin O'zóg), his patter song drawing well deserved, encore-inducing, applause from the small but appreciative audience. Having known Robin some years ago in his lead tenor mode, it is no less welcome to hear him in the baritone patter roles which he takes on so readily nowadays. In Act II we meet two characters not mentioned so far. The Pirate King's Lieutenant, Samuel (Brian Shaw) and The Sergeant of Police (Dave Smith). Yes indeed, Samuel did have a couple of verses in the opening number of the show, but here, in Act II he sings a verse while off-loading a bag of props to the gents' chorus. In both cases Brian did a grand job and good to see him back in another minor principal role with the Society. As the larger than life Sergeant of Police, Dave Smith returns to the role which, Dave tells us, “is his favourite character in all the G&S operettas”! This was a traditional take on the character, and was a pleasure to hear. We are soon to be entertained by the double chorus of Pirates and Policemen – not an easy task when you only have twelve men in the chorus! Nonetheless, this was successfully achieved this evening! In all aspects, the show was well directed by Robin O'zóg and the orchestra performed well under the baton of John Howden. I felt the sets worked extremely well in this show, and the costumes even more so. It was nice seeing the ladies wearing Edwardian crinolines as one would expect in *The Pirates of Penzance*. All in all a well-performed traditional performance. Many thanks for the invite to your production!

Leven Amateur Musical Association: Carousel

Director & Choreographer: Fiona Gallacher Stewart; Musical Director: Lynn Smith

Carousel is one of the musicals that most certainly requires no explanation! Surely, nearly every one of the musical numbers must be known to the audiences out there. It therefore falls to me to comment on (or should I more correctly say, “compliment”) Leven AMA's excellent cast, and production in general. I have known some prologues to drag excessively – to the point of thinking “Well that's the prologue over, is it the interval yet?” However, in Fiona Gallacher Stewart's direction, there was always enough happening on stage to keep one's interest alive. This, combined with a fine orchestra under the musical directorship of Lynn Smith, made for a lively opening to this most popular of shows. Tony Livingston as Billy Bigelow and his sidekick Jigger Craigin (Thom Hughes) were both strongly cast and offered excellent characterisations throughout. The lady principals were no less pleasurable to watch and listen to. Julie (Ashley McLean) and her friend Carrie (Stephanie Baillie) both demonstrated fine vocal talents from the very first sung number “Mister Snow”, while Julie joined by Nettie (Norma Walker) gave a suitably tear-jerking rendition of “You'll Never Walk Alone” in Act II. Mr Snow was given the Charles Sinclair treatment as only Charlie can! Charles' many years of experience in a huge variety of roles, obviously carries weight when taking on yet another character part. Minor principal parts too, made for an altogether believable casting experience. Lorraine King, Gordon Taylor, Katy Holligan and Laurence Crowe all gave first class performances in their own cameo roles. Louise (Luci Laing) and Enoch Snow Jr (Oliver Anderson) headed up the extended Snow family, and, to a child, carried off their parts with confidence – well done! Compliments must also go to the well-drilled chorus – considerable in number – who managed to make use of the confines of The Centre's stage with apparent ease. I particularly like the set, designed by Duncan Milne. This made full use of the stage and included a variety of heights of acting areas, always sought after by directors – all this and well dressed too! All in all, a fine production, LAMA. Many thanks for inviting me along to review your 2018 show!

Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association: The Wizard of Oz

Director: Margaret Paul; Musical Director: Suzanne Stewart; Choreographer: Jacqui Wilson

Very much a family show, and directed, both musically & artistically, as such. A first class cast took this show to their hearts, and certainly lifted mine in terms of my previous feelings for *The Wizard of Oz*! The enthusiasm shown by the chorus in both their singing and dancing, paid tribute to Musical Director Suzanne Stewart and Choreographer Jacqui Wilson. The show was treated neither as purely a children's show nor purely an adult show – in fact the junior and adult members of the cast merged with apparent ease. Niamh Logie as Dorothy Gale belied her biog which states that “this is the first

musical Niamh has appeared in” - really! I am sure after tonight it won't be the last! The Tinman (Craig Tait), Scarecrow (Robert Forbes) and the Cowardly Lion (Andrew Gardiner) formed a formidable team, each of whom extracted every ounce of comedy and pathos from their character. The Witches, Erin Gilliland-Paterson as Glinda the Good and Ali Fleming as The Wicked Witch, both excelled in their characterisations. Both ladies have to be loved or hated (as appropriate) by the audience – adults and children alike, and tonight was no exception to this rule! The title role in the show is, in effect, not a huge part, but, nevertheless is so important to the storyline. In this show, Kevin Keir's portrayal of the all-powerful Wizard was a pleasure to watch. Direction was again in the experienced and capable hands of Margaret Paul. Margaret seems to have the knack of extracting all of the acting ability contained in her cast, using it to its best and presenting it to her audience in a LADAMA show! Technically, sets were colourful and worked well. Video projections for the storm sequences were well produced. Lighting, this year by Kieren Hotchkiss, deserves particular praise. Too often we see beams from intelligent lights flying around a stage/auditorium with little thought given. Tonight, thought had been given to the use of such equipment, culminating in lighting that added to the show rather than distracted. For me, the highlight of the show this year was undoubtedly the extremely high standard of Suzanne Stewart's orchestra. From the very first note we felt we were set for an exhilarating evening of entertainment – and we weren't disappointed! Well done, LADAMA – roll on next year!

Markinch Musical Society: The Pajama Game

Director: Iain Hughes; Musical Director: Peter Robinson; Choreographer: Valda Wicks

The Pajama Game is all about vitality, comedy, strength and stubbornness combined with the wish/need for a pay rise, and the inevitable romance between boss and grievance committee rep which ensues. As we come to expect of Markinch MS, a strong company was evident tonight! Lead principals Sid (Craig Spence) and Babe (Laura Spence) both rose to the occasion with fine singing and acting throughout. Mabel (Margaret MacKenzie) and Vernon Hines (Glen McGill) too, formed a strong team especially in their duet “I'll Never be Jealous Again”. Vernon also made the most of the moment when told to “drop his pants” to put on a pair of pajama trousers – a brief scene that seemed to extend somewhat! Martin Butler as Myron Hasler was suitably bombastic at every opportunity while Ashley Ferguson, as his secretary Gladys Hotchkiss, demonstrated a fine singing voice and confident acting. Supporting principals all came up to the mark in singing, acting and dancing – only one little flaw crept in now and again, and that was that accents occasionally dropped – from Central USA to Central Fife on one occasion! Markinch MS' chorus were never to be outdone by the principals, excelling themselves in several numbers – “Steam Heat” and “Hernando's Hideaway” in particular. Also in these two last-mentioned numbers the dancers, too, demonstrated what can be done when trained by first class choreographer, Valda Wicks. Sets designed by Ian Thomson worked very well, especially, considering the number of scene changes in the show. The thought behind the set design allowed the show to flow, rather than causing it to drag between scenes. Overall, this was a well directed and well sung production to which congratulations and much credit must be given to Director, Iain Hughes, and Musical Director, Peter Robinson. Many thanks to Markinch MS for inviting us to their 2018 show, and to Ian Thomson and his front-of-house team for their usual friendly welcome and hospitality at the interval!

Rosyth & District Musical Society: The Wedding Singer

Director & Choreographer: Yvonne Musgrave; Musical Director: Mary Gilfillan

The Wedding Singer, a less frequently performed musical, premiered in 2006, revolves around Robbie – the wedding singer of the title – his failed relationship with his fiancée Linda and his romance with new love, Julia. This show requires, and was indeed supplied with, a strong cast, all of whom performed both vocally and physically with energy and reassurance. Robbie (Steven Smyth), Sammy (Connor Mitchell), Glen (Scott Hunter), Julia (Sarah Moor), Holly (Lizzie O'Hare) and Linda (Blythe Johnston) all exuded confidence and were ideally cast in their particular roles. The part of Robbie's Grandma, Rosie, lends itself to a characterful actress, and tonight this was certainly the case, being in the capable, experienced hands of Irene Cook! A number of minor principals all played their parts extremely well and, like the principals, excelled in portraying believable characterisations throughout. The chorus both male and female were equally strong and supportive in singing and character, while the dancers' energy was definitely the icing on the (wedding!) cake. Sound may have sounded, to some, on the loud side. However I felt it was quite in keeping with the 80s rock-style score, and certainly a good balance between cast and band was never in doubt. Settings were

minimalistic, in fact, largely furniture props and a number of trucks. However, even with this relatively small number of items to change, the scene changes (and there were many!) did tend to drag a little. Hopefully, as the week progressed these changes would become slicker. The ten piece band, under the baton of Mary Gilfillan, were certainly one of the high points of the show – the musicians obviously being very happy playing this genre of music. Finally, congratulations to director, Yvonne Musgrave, for guiding the cast through an intensive rehearsal process and ending up with a most enjoyable evening of musical entertainment! Thank you, RDMS, for inviting me along, and introducing me to *The Wedding Singer*.

St Andrews Amateur Musical Society: Sister Act

Director: Kris Mordente; Musical Director: Robert Nee; Choreographer: Donna Reilly

The programme notes for tonight's performance of *Sister Act*, begin with "*Sister Act* is the feel-good musical comedy ..." If ever there was an understatement this was one. SAMS' cast sang and danced their way through the show with energy and enthusiasm that must have left them exhausted – it certainly did the audience! The final "Raise Your Voice" could only be described as a tour de force of musical theatre, which deservedly drew a standing ovation from a packed house. An outstanding array of principals backed up by a fine chorus left nothing more to be desired from this show. Donna Reilly brought the character of Deloris Van Cartier to life in all her numbers and also, somehow, managed to find the time to be Choreographer as well! Choreography was excellent too, with hand and foot/leg movements showing a unity throughout the cast! Deloris' "sisters" in the convent each had and maintained their individual characters well. From the very pukka Mother Superior (Katrina Bradley), to a hilarious, bespectacled Sister Mary Patrick (Rachel Nee). Mary Patrick's co-sisters showed equal talent in their own characterisations – especially Kendra Rough as the wandered Sister Mary Martin-of-Tours and Kirsten Smith as Sister Mary Robert, whose rendition of "The Life I Never Led" was a delight to hear. Craig Spence as Curtis made a fine leader of the quartet of "heavies", while his three sidekicks TJ (Colin Sutherland), Joey (Andrew Waghorn) and Pablo (Tiger Mitchell) offered an excellent rendition of "Lady in the Long Black Dress". Callum Stott as Sweatie Eadie maintained a casual swagger throughout, much belying the energy put in to "I Could be that Guy". Congratulations must go to Director, Kris Mordente, for a well-devised and excellently directed production. Praise too for Musical Director Robert Nee, who controlled a well-balanced orchestra, hidden in the upstage scene dock for the majority of the show, but revealed for the Finale, with Robert Nee, himself, getting in to the action as an extremely exuberant Pope John Paul 6. Well done SAMS and many thanks for inviting me along! I am so glad that you managed to reassign dates for your show, after the cancellation due to snow in late February!

REVIEWS

DISTRICT 9 (Grampian & Highlands)

Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre (Intermediates): Half A Sixpence

Director: David Ward; Musical Director: Rhonda Scott; Choreographer: Lynn Adams

The company chose to put on the 2007/08 touring version of this perennial favourite, which has all the storylines and characters of the original Tommy Steele version, but with additional scenes and some new musical numbers with music by David Heneker and lyrics by Warner Brown. It allowed this group of teenagers to showcase their prodigious talents to the full. Samuel Anderson was outstanding as Kipps – singing, acting and dancing with great confidence whilst maintaining a near perfect cockney accent. His rendition of "What Should I Feel?" was full of emotion and his rendition of "Half A Sixpence" with Ann was a delight. Ann was played by the petite Beth Nicholson who had great stage presence and a wonderful strong voice shown to its best in her solo "I Know What I Am". Kaleb Connell was a superbly over-the-top Chitterlow eliciting gales of laughter at his every appearance. Jennifer McClung was the picture of elegance with a cut crystal accent which never wavered and a delightful singing voice. Kipps' fellow shop workers – Sid (Murray Hossick), Buggins (Andrew Robertson), Pearce (Ben Campbell), Flo (Gracie Spencer), Kate (Ellie Yeats) and Victoria (Lisa McCallum) – worked well together and gave us some wonderful harmonies in numbers such as "A Normal Working Day", "I Don't Believe A Word Of It" and a "Proper Gentleman". Strong support was given by Lewis Poole (Mr Shalford), Eilidh Bisset (Mrs Walsingham) and Christopher Dewsbury (Young Walsingham). The chorus singing and dancing were of a very high standard and I particularly enjoyed their rumbustious "Flash, Bang Wallop!" The set designed by Susan Ball, in cool shades of blue, was simple but elegant and truly gave the impression of a 1900s south coast seaside town.

Costuming was colourful and appropriate to the characters and period. Well done AYMT for another excellent show.

Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre (Juniors): High School Musical – On Stage
Director: Shirley McGill; Musical Director: Jenny Cranna; Choreographer: Fiona Beedie

This stage version of *Disney's High School Musical* was the perfect vehicle for this group of talented youngsters with lots of good songs, scope for energetic movement and strong characters. Joel Anderson was excellent in the lead role of Troy Bolton, the basketball star torn between his loyalty to his team and his burgeoning love for fellow student Gabriella. He had a good strong singing voice and confident acting. He was equally matched by Sophie Love as Gabriella Montez, his academically gifted love interest. I was particularly impressed by their rendition of "I Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You" at the opening of Act II. The antics of the stage-struck sister and brother, Sharpay and Ryan Evans, played by Rachael Henderson and Alex Andrews, as they tried to prevent Troy and Gabriella usurping them for the leads in the school musical brought much laughter from the audience. Also adding to the humour of the piece was the diminutive Ezra Usmani as radio announcer Jack Scott. Strong support was given by Sam Mitchell and Alex Donnelly as Troy's basketball buddies Chad Danforth and Zeke Baylor, Olivia Tait and Ayla Chalmers as Gabriella's fellow Brainiacs Taylor McKessie and Martha Cox, Eleanor Barr as Drama teacher Mrs Darbus, Daniel Park as Coach Bolton and Grace Richardson as the drama club composer and pianist Kelsi. Singing and movement of the large chorus was of a high standard. The set by Susan Begg was simple but effective and the costuming was colourful and appropriate for the characters. Well done to everyone at Junior AYMT for an excellent evening's entertainment.

Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre (Seniors): Beauty and the Beast
Director: Shirley McGill; Musical Director: Kenny Hossick; Choreographer: Mhorag Anderson

From the opening notes of the overture to the shining talents of the principals to the glistening costumes it was obvious we were in for a sparkling evening's entertainment. Sixteen year old schoolgirl Stephanie Walker was outstanding as Belle with magnificent voice and stage presence. Her rendition of "A Change In Me" was delightful. The change from outright hostility to love between Belle and the Beast – another outstanding performance from 19 year old Sean Farmery – was beautifully portrayed by the two young actors. Sean's renditions of "How Long Must This Go On?" and "If I Can't Love Her" were powerful and poignant in equal measure. The chemistry between Calum Armstrong as the tightly sprung Cogsworth and Callum Adams as the flashy Lumière made for many hilarious moments. Lucy Harris made a charming Mrs Potts with a beautiful strong voice belying her 17 years – her rendition of "Beauty and the Beast" had the audience spellbound. Bradley Phillips made a superbly swaggering and egotistic Gaston, ably assisted by Angus Hogg as his put-upon side-kick Lefou. Strong support was given by Alastair Eddie (Maurice, Belle's father) and Katie Hindle (Babette), Imogen Bews (Mme De La Grande Bouche) and 10 year old Ezra Usmani (Chip) as the other members of the household. The singing and dancing of the chorus was of a high standard – especially in the spectacular "Be Our Guest" number. The set, designed and built by Susan Ball, moved seamlessly between the dark forbidding castle interior to bright village square. Congratulations to everyone involved for another exceptional production.

AOC Productions: Oliver!
Director: Craig Pike; Musical Director: Ewen A Ritchie; Choreographer: Sophie Hamilton Pike

"Please Sir, can I have some more?" were the words on the lips of the audience at the end of this outstanding production. The production team managed to bring every emotion – joy, pathos and even horror – to its full depth. The 14 strong chorus of Orphans/Fagin's gang shone with confidence in both their singing and dancing – particularly in "Food, Glorious Food" and "Be Back Soon". Young Archie MacLean was outstanding as Oliver Twist, with never a word, note or step out of place. His rendition of "Where is love?" was heart-rending. Rory McIver as the Artful Dodger gave an excellent portrayal of cheeky-cockney lad and concerned mentor. Callum Stuart's portrayal of the hard-shelled, but soft-centred, Fagin was spot on. He had a genuine rapport with the kids in his gang which was evident in the "Pick a Pocket or Two" and "Be Back Soon" numbers. His rendition of "Reviewing the Situation" was hilarious. Amanda Massie was, for me, the perfect Nancy moving easily from the deliciously raucous, almost bawdy, in "Oom Pah Pah" to the movingly thoughtful in "As Long As He Needs Me". Ian Towns as Bill Sykes was evil personified and his rendition of "My Name" was truly menacingly

delivered. Chris Wallace and Anne Hingston as Mr Bumble and Widow Corney were a brilliant comic pairing, their verbal sparring ringing lots of bells with the couples in the audience! Strong support was given by Andrew Brebner and Wendy Ross (Mr & Mrs Sowerberry), Bill Wood (Mr Brownlow), Hilary Esson (Mrs Bedwin) and James Stephen (Dr Grimwig). The adult chorus were in fine voice especially in the "Consider Yourself" and "Who Will Buy?" numbers with some delightful harmonies, and the company movement was excellent. The 12 piece orchestra, under the baton of conductor Ewan A Ritchie, produced a sound that was always sympathetic to the singers. The costuming was appropriate to the period and to the characters. The set was suitably grey to reflect the London of the time and allowed for easy transition between the exterior and interior scenes. Congratulations to all at AOC Productions for another outstanding production.

Attic Theatre: Bonnie & Clyde

Director: Shirley Torrie; Musical Director: Craig McDermott

This was the first time I had seen a production of this dramatic musical with music by Frank Wildhorn, lyrics by Don Black and book by Ivan Menchell and I was "mighty impressed!" (if you'll forgive the Americanism). It tells the story of the ill-fated lovers and outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow from their meeting in 1930 to their deaths in 1934. The score is a combination of rockabilly, blues and gospel redolent of the music of Texas in the Great Depression years which was played with gusto by Craig McDermott and his 8-piece band. Rhona Johnston and Matthew McBrier as the lead characters Bonnie and Clyde were truly outstanding both in their acting and singing abilities – they brought the chemistry between the two characters alive on stage. Excellent performances too were given by Lewis Craddock and Charlie Aitken as Clyde's brother and sister-in-law Buck and Blanche Barrow. Blanche's number with her trio of hairdressing salon customers "You're Goin' Back to Jail" was hilarious contrasting well with her more thoughtful solo "Now That's What You Call A Dream" in Act II. Callum Bell gave a very strong portrayal of Sheriff's Deputy Ted Hinton, driven by his love of Bonnie to rescue her from the clutches of Clyde – his duet with Clyde "You Can Do Better Than Him" was excellent. As the young Bonnie and Clyde, Beth Nicholson and Tom Dixon gave good accounts of the characters, with Beth in particular having a good, strong singing voice in the "Picture Show" number. Strong support was given by Rhonda Scott (Emma Parker, Bonnie's long-suffering mother), Craig Scott (Sheriff Schmid), Cath Munro (Cumie Barrow, Clyde's anguished mother), Kenny O'Brien (Henry Barrow, Clyde's dispirited father). The ensemble did not have much to do musically but gave a rousing rendition of the gospel-like "God's Arms Are Always Open" led by Scott Jameson's powerful Preacher. The multi-level set, in shades of brown, gave off the atmosphere of dusty small-town America of the period and with a few simple changes moved easily between interior and exterior scenes. The costuming was appropriate to the era. Thank you all for bringing this entertaining but thought provoking production to the North East.

Elgin Amateur Dramatic Society: Best of Enemies and Kids

Directors: Sandy Dow (*Best of Enemies*); Mawgan Lean, Jacky Pratt (*Kids*)

For their spring production the Society decided to put on an evening of two one act plays allowing younger members of the group to gain more acting and directorial experience.

Best of Enemies (by Ron Nicol)

This is a powerful, gritty and violent tale of gang culture set in a Scottish inner city. Fraser, the overbearing leader of the gang, has escaped from prison and is looking to find out who grassed him up for the stabbing of his friend Rab the previous year. The story is told through a series of scenes interlaced by monologues by each character. Ben Mortimer as the bullying Fraser gave an extremely powerful and menacing performance as he interacted with each of the other gang members. Charlotte Johnstone gave an excellent performance as Lexy, the teenager forced into prostitution to make ends meet. The scene after she is raped and battered by Fraser was particularly effecting. Strong performances too were given by James Jackson as Rab the victim of the first stabbing, Robyn Lean as Delia the level-headed influence and Dominic Myers as Bugs the boy who is always picked on until in the final moments of the play is forced to resort to violence to stand up to the bully. An excellent handling of this dark storyline by the young actors, who had the added pressure of performing the world premiere of the piece in front of the author.

Kids (by John Morgan)

This was an amusing piece based on the premise that all children are born intelligent, but that by the time they can effectively communicate, they have forgotten the information or had it knocked out of them. So there was a link between the two pieces of bullying though in *Kids* it is of a more childish, unintentional kind. All the children are played by adults suitably attired in children's clothing. The play is set in a play park and the simple set included a working swing and a climbing frame made of colourful building blocks. Mawgan Lean played the uber-intelligent Baby, complete with nappy, egging on his older brothers 3 year old Johnny (played by Dominic Myers) and 5 year old Sam (played by Aidan Hyndman) to get their older sisters 7 year old Wendy (played by Gemma Pirie) and 9 and a bit year old Ellie (played by Kirsty Weir). All the actors were very strong and the fun they were having on stage transferred easily to the audience judged by the laughter.

Well done to all involved for an evening of contrasting but thought provoking plays.

Elgin Musical Theatre: Anything Goes

Director: Ken Smith; Musical Director: Bob Garrity; Choreographer: Julie O'Hare

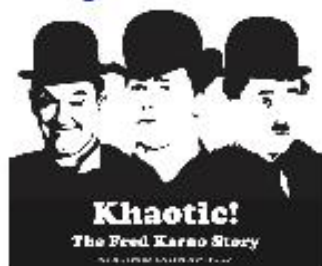
Cole Porter's wonderful music and lyrics and P G Woodhouse and Guy Bolton's comical characters were brought to life in this lively production. Nicola Lilley was outstanding as the brash evangelist Reno Sweeney with a lovely sense of comic timing and belter of a voice. Mike Brown, in his first major principal role, was convincing as the love-sick Billy Crocker and had good rapport with both of his "love" interests, Reno and Hope Harcourt. Claire Smith played the debutante Hope Harcourt, torn between marrying for love or security, with just the right amount of demureness and steely determination. I particularly enjoyed her rendition of the gentle "Goodbye, Little Dream Goodbye" in the second act. Paul Woods as Moonface Martin, the hapless gangster, had the audience in gales of laughter at his comic expressions, especially in his rendition of "Be Like The Bluebird", and his disguising antics. In this he was ably assisted by Leigh McLaggan as sailor mad Erma; her rendition of "Buddie, Beware" with the sailors was a fine example of flirtation and put-down. However, stealing every scene he was in with wonderful comic delivery and over-the-top mannerisms, was Sandy Duncan as the dotty aristocrat Lord Evelyn Oakleigh – his performance of "The Gypsy In Me" was a delight to behold! Strong performances too were given by Davina Smith as Evangeline Harcourt (Hope's mother) and Calum McKenzie as Elisha Whitney, her dipsomaniac millionaire suitor (and Billy's boss). Strong support was given by Ian Duncan as the Ship's Captain and Lynne Ward as the Ship's Purser. The full power of the company's singing and movement prowess was shown in the fast moving Act I finale "Anything Goes" and in the rousing "Blow Gabriel, Blow" in Act II. The multi-level set, designed and built by Sandy and Jan Duncan, allowed for an easy flow between the scenes. Congratulations to all for a most enjoyable show and, as I said after the show, I'm sure Cole Porter would have been proud of you.

The Florians: The Vicar of Dibley

Director: Caroline Nicol

From the opening notes of Howard Goodall's arrangement of the 23rd Psalm we were transported back to the mid-1990s and a time of more gentle, but nonetheless hilarious, comedy. With a beautifully constructed and decorated split set – one half representing the Parish Hall and the other the Vicarage – the action moved swiftly between the many scenes. The director had managed to assemble a magnificent cast who not only had all the vocal mannerisms of the original TV series characters but uncannily also physically resembled them. Lesley Maclean as the ebullient Geraldine Granger, the eponymous Vicar of Dibley, gave an excellent performance – her interactions with Alice were hilarious. Sasha Devine was outstanding as the ditzy verger Alice Tinker – her every facial expression having the audience in stitches – a true tribute to the late Emma Chambers. Matt Tyrer as her shy and tongue-tied love interest Hugo Horton had everyone in the audience rooting for him in his quest to woo the mad-cap Alice. Richard Miemczyck as David Horton was every inch the cynical and pompous Council Chairman. Trevor Nicol as the stuttering and indecisive Jim Trott was excellent – his every utterance eliciting gales of laughter. Martin Anderson also gave an excellent portrayal of sex-mad Owen Newitt with his pursuit of Geraldine adding greatly to the comedy in the piece. Ian Shearer as the Council Secretary was suitably dim and pernicky. Anne Bamborough as Letitia Copley the organist and caterer – her description of the ingredients in her concoctions had the audience grueing – gave strong support. A truly wonderful, laughter filled evening's entertainment. Congratulations everyone!

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(1m, 7f) Discover the unlikely friendships that develop between seven very different women, tutored by one hapless male, on a summer writing holiday. Sun, sangria and story-telling, what could possibly go wrong! Meet Moira the tactless hypochondriac, Clare the dippy yoga teacher, and feisty Rita, to name but a few, as the women embark on a voyage of discovery about themselves, their hopes and their dreams... and uncover some surprising home truths.



Agatha Crusty And The Health Spa Murders by Derek Webb

(3m, 7f) Amateur detective Agatha Crusty decides that a spell at a health spa is just what she needs to recharge her batteries. At first things go swimmingly, but soon, when a body is found in the mud bath, Agatha finds herself yet again, due to the inept DI Simon Aster, having to swap pleasure for business and 'assist' his enquiries by doing the job herself. There's humour throughout, but there is also a genuine mystery with an ingenious plot to tax the little grey cells of the audience. (This is the third play in the Agatha Crusty series)

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The Garrick Singers: Sister Act

Director & Choreographer: Trish Geddes; Musical Directors: Lydia Jackson, Sharon Macleod

Having such a strong female chorus this show was the perfect vehicle for this company and, despite a change of Musical Director about six weeks before the show due to ill health and some subsequent changes to the principals, they carried it off brilliantly. Kerry Russell was a vivacious Delores Van Cartier with a good singing voice and nice comic timing. Lynda Wood as the Mother Superior showed just the right amount of steely determination to protect her charges and compassion for Delores' predicament – her renditions of "Here Within These Walls" and "I Haven't Got A Prayer" were a delight. Trish Geddes as the excitable Sister Mary Patrick and Kirsty Gordon as the droll Sister Mary Lazarus both added much to the comedy of the piece. Rosanna Burton as the young postulant Sister Mary Robert portrayed the change from shyness to confidence extremely well and her rendition of "The Life I Never Led" was greeted by silence and then rapturous applause from the almost full house audience. The men were not to be outdone. Iain McKenzie gave a strong performance as the gangster Curtis with a powerful rendition of "When I Find My Baby". As his inept side-kicks TJ (John F Kennedy), Joey (Shaun Cowan) and Pablo (Derek Brown) were hilarious, especially in their version of "Lady In The Long Black Dress". Andy Hurst as Detective "Sweaty" Eddie Souther had everyone rooting for him in his quest to win Delores' affections. Strong support was given by Gerry Revie as Monsignor O'Hara. The company singing, especially in the closing numbers of Acts I and II, was truly heavenly and uplifting. The sets were simple but effective as was the costuming. Well done to all at The Garrick Singers.

Haddo Children's Theatre: Treasure Island!

Director: Jeannie Price; Musical Director: Rob Fryer; Choreographer: Gayle McCombie

This musical version of Robert Louis Stevenson's well known story suited this group of over 50 children (aged from 8 to 16 years) very well, giving huge scope for principals and chorus alike. Karenza Williams (Jim Hawkins) had good stage presence with a good singing voice and clear diction. Jan Cudak (Long John Silver) was believable as the pirate leader moving easily between being ingratiatingly nice to comically evil. Amy Rattray and Sophie McKenzie made a delightful comic pairing as the inept pirates, Black Dog and Big Jesse – their duet "I Wanna Go Home!" was a hoot. Strong support was given by Emily Keith (Squire), Jago Love-Jennings (Dr Livesey), Izzy Jones (Arrow, the Ship's Captain) and Gregor Keith (Ben Gunn). Mention too must be made of Erin Murphy as colourful Polly the Parrott. The large chorus of pirates, phantoms and bevy of beauties sang and moved well – the piratical numbers at the opening and closing of both acts being particularly rousing. The well-constructed multi-level set, overseen by George the Seagull, was colourful and changed easily between locations – from the Admiral Benbow Inn to the deck of the Hispaniola to the beaches and jungle of Skull Island – even the onstage cannon fired at this performance (a first apparently!). Costumes too were colourful and appropriate to each character. Well done to everyone involved – it was good to see such enthusiasm from the young actors being much appreciated by the full-house audience.

Inverness Musical Theatre: The Wizard of Oz

Director & Choreographer: Claire Fisher; Musical Director: Susan Munro

From the opening notes of the overture I could tell the full house audience were in for a magical evening. Amy Youngson as Dorothy had wonderfully strong stage presence, obvious from her first steps on the stage in the legendary blue gingham dress, and a beautiful singing voice shown to its best in her opening rendition of "Over The Rainbow". Matt Tryer as the brain-less, but evidently sensible, Scarecrow gave an excellent performance, his loose-limbed antics on being released from his tether being almost acrobatic. Another excellent performance was given by David Saunders as the heart-less Tin Man – his performance of "If I Only Had A Heart" being particularly poignant. Alistair Davidson's portrayal of the Lion was the epitome of comic cowardliness – his rendition of "King of the Forest" was truly regal. Caroline MacPherson's portrayal of Miss Gultch/Wicked Witch, complete with truly evil-sounding cackle, was eminently boo-able and was in total contrast to Michelle Newell's sweet, pink candy-floss like Glinda/Aunt Em. I take my hat off to both actresses for making their aerial entrances and exits look so effortless! Eddie Docherty in the dual roles of Professor Marvel/Wizard of Oz and Richard Miemczyk as Uncle Henry/Head Guard both gave strong support. Special mention must be made of Rhona the impeccably behaved terrier who elicited many oohs and aahs every time she appeared on stage as Toto. The large group of children playing the Munchkins sang and moved

well and those who had lines to say had very clear diction. The adult chorus too sang and moved well – the trios of ladies playing the crows and trees added much laughter to the scenes in which they were involved as did the men of the Winkies Guard. As one would expect in this show the scenery was bold and colourful as were the costumes. Congratulations to all at Inverness Musical Theatre for another excellent evening's entertainment.

Islesburgh Drama Group: Absurd Person Singular

Director: Morag Mouat

Alan Ayckbourn's 1972 play, divided into three acts, documents the changing fortunes of three married couples with each act taking place at a get-together at one of the couples' homes on successive Christmas Eves. Act I is set in the kitchen of Sidney and Jane Hopcroft a couple who are determined to work their way up the social and professional ladders. David Smith as Sydney gave a good performance as the socially inept working-class man whose eagerness to please those he regards as his superiors makes his house-work obsessed wife, played delightfully by Mandy Phillips, more and more nervous – her expressions in the scene where she is trying to get back into the kitchen after being stranded in the garden in the rain had the audience in gales of laughter. Act II is set in the kitchen of up and coming architect Geoffrey Jackson and his wife Eva. Martin Summers played the Jack-the-Lad Geoffrey with all the confidence and bravura required for the character in Acts I and II, which contrasted nicely with his portrayal of the dispirited broken man in Act III. Donna-Marie Leask as the depressed Eva Jackson was outstanding. In Act II her portrayal of a woman whose multitude of attempts at suicide were thwarted each time was hilarious, but sensitively handled, even although she didn't utter one word! Act III is set in the kitchen of banker Ronald Brewster-Wright and his wife Marion. Cameron MacKenzie as Ronald played the ironic and somewhat indifferent character well. I particularly liked his reactions when electrocuted in Act III! Stephenie Pagulayan as Marion was excellent as the snobbish stereotypical banker's wife and her descent into alcoholism was well portrayed and added hugely to the comedy of the piece. The three sets were well designed by club member David Grieve with the use of bright orange and green units to distinguish between the modernist Act I and Act II kitchens and a more muted palate in Act III. Costuming was appropriate to the characters and the period (I remember the flared trousers well). Congratulations to director Morag Mouat, her cast and crew for a most entertaining evening.

MSD Productions: Lottie

Director & Choreographer: Rhona Mitchell; Musical Director: Ashley Forbes

This play by the late Charles Barron, with music by Ashley Forbes, tells the story of Lottie McDonald an 11 year old inmate of the Inverurie and District Poorhouse in the late 19th century and her interactions with the other inmates, staff and the people of the surrounding area. The dialogue and most of the lyrics are in the native Doric – a challenge to the youngsters performing but one which they conquered completely. Thirteen year-old Ruby Harrison was outstanding as Lottie capturing both the innocence and cheeky confidence of the character perfectly. Catriona Edwards and Euan Banks as Mary and Richard Noble, the Matron and Governor of the Poorhouse respectively, gave very good performances showing a more sensitive side to the characters as they warm to Lottie and eventually adopt her. They contrasted well with the grotesques of the Cook (Findley Friel), Cook's Assistant (Mikey Nicoll), Nurse Agatha (Daniel Brammer) and Doctor Wylie, who while portraying the worst kind of carers, added greatly to the comedy in the piece; as did Olivia Watt's demanding Granny Cran as the matriarch of a family doing all they can to avoid the stigma of entering the poorhouse. In this she was ably assisted by Mother, Bella Cran (Eleanor Harper) and her daughters Poppy (Lola Brown), Alice (Neave Atwell), Isabel (Katie MacLean) and Hannah (Rowan Gane). Strong performances were given by Imogen Watt (Barbara McDonald, Lottie's unmarried birth mother) and Aaron Bisset (John Hutton) as their romance blossomed. Another strong performance was given by Arwen Scott as the local midwife Mrs Faskin. Narration of the piece was in the excellent hands of tartan attired Josh Simpson as The Chairman of the board of governors and his coterie of four gossips Alex Kelman, Meg Stranger, Carys Taylor and Albany Hosie. The singing and dancing by all the cast was excellent especially in the full company numbers when all 29 took to the stage. The set was simple but effective allowing for easy transition between locations. Costuming, by Liz Cork, was beautifully designed and executed and entirely appropriate to the period and characters. Well done everyone for another wonderful production.

Ury Players: Breezeblock Park
Director: Fiona Westland

It was a refreshing change to be invited to review a play and a Willy Russell one made the anticipation even stronger. The action takes place at Christmas time where family members have gathered to celebrate the season. Phrases like “all for show” and “keeping up with the Joneses” sum up the hilarious mood but with Willy Russell’s astute character observations there is of course much more going on. Housewife Betty carries the play and Lynn Zaccarini painted her character beautifully right from the opening curtain with Garry Brindley’s effortless portrayal of her hen-pecked husband, Syd, a good foil. Heather Adams Officer played Sandra their daughter with the right amount of sullenness. Macho Jimmy, Betty’s brother performed with ease by Andrew Dart, takes no time in extracting Syd’s secret flirtation at work. His wife Vera however finds it hard to get a word in edgeways with Betty. But with Liz Forrest in the part she manages to convey her feelings in a wealth of expressions. Betty has her match in sister Reeny. Freda Adams tackled the part with a soft voice which barely conceals her steely determination to be one-up on everyone. Douglas Clark as her car-obsessed husband, Ted, is a very convincing support for his wife, while their seemingly perfect daughter Janet is performed with style by Heather Smith. It is only when Sandra’s secret boyfriend, Tim played very ably by Tim Roberts enters the fray that we discover Sandra is pregnant and has no intentions of marrying. Shocks follow when the audience learns the rather sinister reason for Janet’s meek demeanour. The characterisation, comedy timing and diction throughout was impressive. A truly entertaining evening.

Gordon Smith

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Access to members' area of website

- ★ Factsheets, including:
 - ☆ Child protection policy
 - ☆ Performance regulations and copyright
 - ☆ Model constitution
 - ☆ Production team duties
 - ☆ Fundraising
- ★ Show listings online at noda.org.uk

Advice and services

- ★ Discounted rates on NODA insurance
- ★ Legal helpline
- ★ Health and safety helpline
- ★ DBS checks
- ★ Performance rights and scripts for pantomimes

Regional support

- ★ Dedicated regional representative
- ★ Regional youth advisor
- ★ Show reports
- ★ Regional social media advertising
- ★ Contact lists for MDs, directors, choreographers etc
- ★ Regional conference, awards and workshops

Training

- ★ NODA Theatre Summer School
- ★ Bursaries for Summer School training

Awards

- ★ National awards ceremony
- ★ Poster and programme competition

Discounts

- ★ Royalties discounts from major rightsholders
- ★ Special offers from partners

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REVIEWS
DISTRICT 10 (Angus & Kincardine)

The Angus Minstrels: 2017 Annual Show

Director: Joan Mitchell; Musical Director: David McMullan

A Moulin Rouge musical selection made for an unusual and visually glittering start to the evening's entertainment with some very effective choreography complementing the drama of the music. Indeed, from start to finish the audience was treated to a very eclectic mix of musical genres and moods. The Disney and Motown sections in the first half showed the talents of the whole company with an enjoyable Andrews Sisters trio (Rachel Jacques, Kirsten Hammond and Louise Greenhill) and an entertaining "Me And My Shadow" duet by Jamie Watson and Jimmy Gray adding to the mix. "My Way" sung very capably by Blair Ruxton and "Copacabana", well performed by Scott Ramsay and Stage Academy, brought variety to the programme. A selection of Bond themes opened the second half giving soloists Jill Bridges and Stewart Malcolm the chance to shine. An unexpected medley of Adele songs was very impressive, then we were off to the Swinging 60s and some real toe tapping numbers. Memorable solos followed with Eileen Christison, who gave a very fine rendition of "Slipping Through My Fingers" and "Winner Takes It All" sung effortlessly by Jill Bridges. Abba Mania provided the chance for some catchy choreography while Claire Rioch, Fiona Gibb and Marlene Kea brought humour in the trio from *Gypsy*. Heidi Cathro sang a very impressive "Skyfall" and the Dixie medley which has become the Minstrels signature finale did not disappoint in spectacle and sound. This was musical director David McMullan's first minstrel show and he brought a freshness to the musical selection. Lastly, special mention has to go to The Gordon School of Dance who delighted and amazed us throughout the show with their energetic, graceful and polished performances. Altogether another success for the Angus Minstrels.

Brechin Amateur Operatic Society: Dirty Rotten Scoundrels

Director: Graeme W Baird; Musical Director: Gordon Smith; Choreographer: Liz Burns Smith

I knew nothing about this show – never having seen the stage version or the 1988 film version – so had no idea of what to expect. So I was pleasantly surprised by Brechin AOS's excellent production of this extremely amusing show full of wonderful dialogue and witty lyrics. Graeme Baird and Alan Matheson as the two conmen Lawrence Jameson and Freddy Benson respectively, made a great comic pairing as they tried to get the better of each other. Both had strong singing voices and perfect comic timing – shown to their best in the "All About Ruprecht" number. Gill Smith Matheson as Christine Colgate, the main target of Lawrence and Freddy's sting, was excellent and her performance as the naïve "heiress" was so convincing I had no clue she was indeed the third con artist until the big reveal in the last scene! Jim Ramsay as police chief on the take Andre Thibault and Caroline Fenwick as wealthy, ditsy and romantic American Muriel Eubanks added greatly to the humour as their burgeoning romance blossomed especially in the "Like Zis, Like Zat" number. Laura Ferguson again added to the humour with her portrayal of the Dolly Parton-esque Jolene Oakes. The chorus singing and movement was of the high standard we have come to expect from this company. The use of beautifully drawn stylised projections of the French Riviera and simple furnishings made good use of the small stage and ensured there were no long pauses between the scenes. Costuming was appropriate to the characters and period. Well done to all at Brechin AOS for a most entertaining evening!

Douglas Clark

Carnoustie Musical Society: The Producers

Director: John White; Musical Director: Colin Grant; Choreographer: Jane Fenton

A sparkling invitation to opening night by usherettes Claire Smith and Kerry Mitchell set this production off on the right foot. But the action really steps up when we meet The King Of Broadway, down-on-his-luck Broadway producer Max Bialystock, played with real flair by Chris Duke, and are absorbed into his strange lifestyle funded by sex-mad old ladies. A solution to his financial crisis arises with the appearance of timorous accountant Leo Bloom (performed skilfully by Grant Roach) and a light bulb moment: more money can be made by a failed show than a successful one. Bialystock and a reluctant Bloom set about finding the worst script, written by crazy Hitler sympathiser, Franz Liebkind (played imposingly by Kevin Smith), the corniest director; outrageously

gay, Roger Debres (Brian Boyd) and a cast to ensure failure. All this financed by Bialystock's portfolio of little old ladies' cheques for sexual favours. The partnership becomes a threesome when exuberantly sexual Ulla (vivaciously performed by Elaine Scougal) takes the men by storm. Well supported by an energetic cast, there are hilarious moments throughout. Brian Boyd as Roger and Rodger Brunton as Carmen, his lovestruck assistant provide many, together with Touch Me Feel Me performed by Lesley Ritchie and the delightful Zimmer dancing little old ladies. Production numbers like "Springtime For Hitler" with dancing Hitlers and tap-dancing storm troopers were energetic and entertaining with unfussy effective choreography danced well and sung with gusto. Amazingly and disastrously the show is a success and though the pair end up in jail we are still cheering them on. A tremendous evening's entertainment. Well done to all!

Kirriemuir Amateur Operatic Society: 9 to 5 – The Musical

Director: Ewan Campbell; Musical Director: Colin Grant; Choreographer: Susan Hughes

The iconic "9 to 5" opening number sets this fun, happy show off to a very lively start introducing the downtrodden employees of Consolidated Industries. First we meet hardworking widow Violet Newstead, played effortlessly by Helen Shearer and her teenage son, Josh, nicely performed by Brodie Taylor. Next we learn about Doralee Rhodes, Franklin Hart's misunderstood secretary. Donna Douglas is the convincing Dolly Parton look and soundalike ably supported by James Dobbie as her loving husband, Dwayne. Then we meet Judy Bernley, the timid newbie to the company, well portrayed by Nichola O'Connor. All three women are about to change the lives of all at Consolidated but especially that of Franklin Hart Jnr the lecherous, bullying boss. Neil Stewart plays the part confidently and with style. Hart does however earn the undying love of one woman in the company, straitlaced office manager, Roz Keith. Helen Taylor brings humour and passion to the role especially in her number, *Heart to Hart*. Despite Roz's tale telling, Violet, Doralee and Judy bond as friends and live out their wildest fantasies of giving their boss the boot. But pushed to the limit they end up kidnapping Hart and running the company the way they know it should be run. Joe played sensitively by Dylan McKay, the junior office accountant, in love with Violet, helps them discover that Hart has actually been cooking the books. Of the smaller roles, Jennifer Bruce as Margaret, the office drunk, stood out. The company rose to the challenge in a show that needs big voices and even bigger personalities. Congratulations to KAOS and the production team.

Spotlights Community Youth Theatre: The First Spotlights Showcase

Director: Marley Hunter; Musical Director: Colin Grant;

Choreographers: Rhoda Burke, Lisa Callander, Louise Cumming, Leanne Prophet, Demi Russo, Kaya Eggleton-Hunter, Cali Barclay, Gemma Carnegie

This showcase was performed by a young company in every sense of the word. Not only was the age range from under 5 to early teens but this was their very first production. However, from the enthusiasm displayed it certainly wasn't obvious that some of the cast hadn't even been on stage before. The audience was treated to a selection of musical theatre songs appropriate to the cast age range including some of the classics from *Oliver!* and *Annie* interspersed with less familiar choices from *School Of Rock* and *Matilda*. Choreography spanned the age range and on the whole was remembered by most of the company but any lapses were overshadowed by the energy, enthusiasm and personality sustained in particular by the younger chorus. In fact, the audience could not fail to support the company in all their endeavours. Full marks must go to the production team for encouraging cast members to participate not only in choreography, but in backstage work and even on the instrumental side. A real team effort! Highlights included the younger chorus singing "I Just Can't Wait To Be King", the trio performing "Castle On A Cloud" and the older chorus in "School of Rock". All the solos therein and throughout the showcase were testament to the potential of this young cast. We will look forward to seeing their next production.

Note to Society Committees:

The members' area of the NODA website contains a large number of very useful factsheets. Should you have any questions, the NODA Head Office staff are there along with Regional Reps and the Councillor to provide support and advice.

NODA Theatre Summer School - A unique opportunity there for the taking...

Noda Theatre Summer School prides itself on providing professional training for amateur theatre and this year is no exception. If you have always wanted to attend but not yet taken the step or if you have been before but not signed up for this year we have two excellent pieces of news:

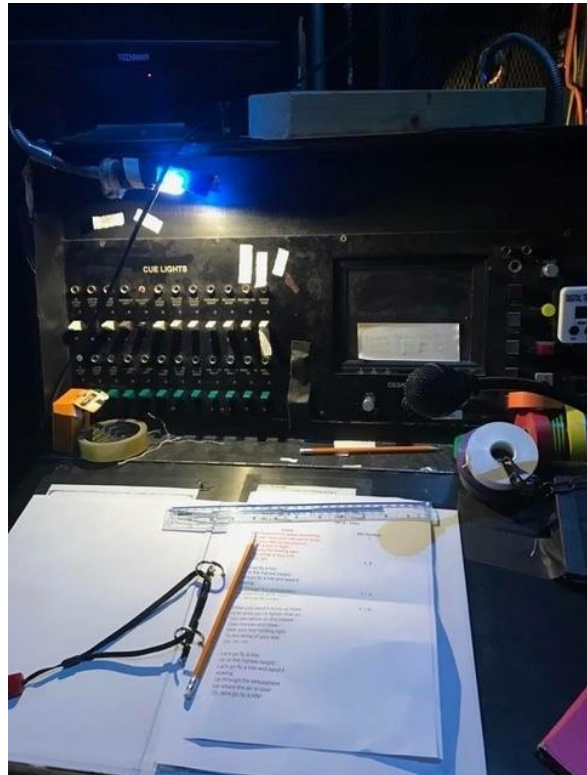
1. It's not too late!
2. There are still some places left!

If your society could do with more knowledge and expertise in technical aspects of theatre we have two perfect courses...

An introduction to Stage Management will give you all the tools you needed to make your productions slick and professional. Under Mark Shayle's brilliant guidance students will gain vital experience and knowledge in the fascinating backstage world of theatre.

Alternatively you might want to specialize in theatre sound, a discipline that can make or break a production. Paul Steer will guide our **Sound – From Empty**

Space to All Systems Go students in all aspects of set up and operation of sound for theatre productions.



Both of these technical courses are utterly practical and accessible offering an opportunity for anyone to grow in confidence, knowledge and experience.

Note to Committees:

If you have a youth society or section, invite the Youth Adviser as well as the Regional Representative to their shows.

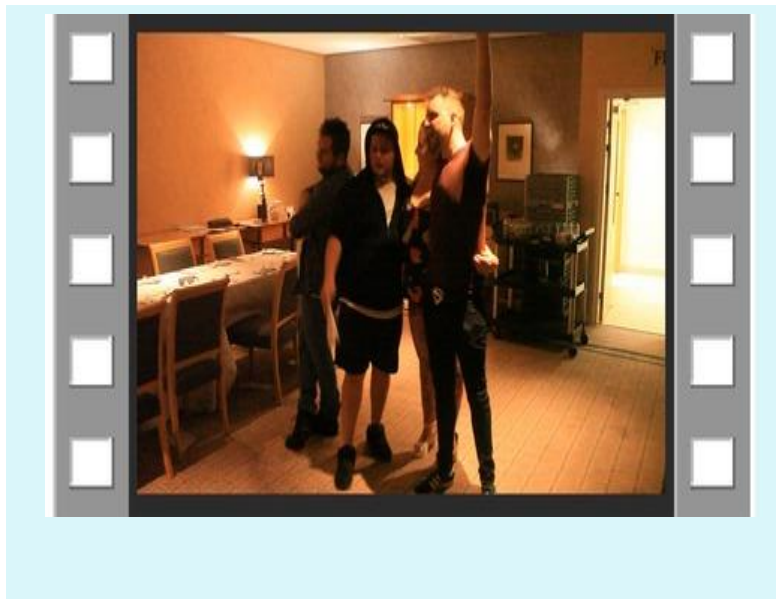
3. There is a limited number of grants available for new students applying for either the Stage Management or Sound course! Please [see the website](#) for further details.

As valuable as the backstage courses are it may be that you are destined to be on the stage and if this is the case we have just the thing for you!



With a Song in Your Heart is an opportunity to sing for the love of singing. This course tutored by the excellent Marjory Watson guarantees to improve your confidence as a singer by developing your vocal technique, developing your skills and boosting your self-belief.

Finally we have an offer that is just a little different. If you have ever wondered what it might be like to have a career in film and television our short courses **Acting for Screen** and **Writing for Screen** are the perfect opportunity to find out what it is to be a writer or actor on the screen. You can do one or both of these complimentary short courses during which you will have the opportunity to learn how you can effectively create stories for and to the camera



This year's Summer School takes place on the 28th of July to the 4th of August at Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire – in addition to being taught by a team of top class tutors and being part of a generous, creative and inspirational set of students all of your accommodation and catering is included in the package.

Please check out our website for details of these and other courses for this summer and to book your place but please hurry as places are limited. If you have any questions please email summerschool@noda.org.uk

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Productions advertised on the NODA website for performance in August 2018 and beyond.

Sister Act

Forfar Musical Society
Reid Hall, Forfar
Tuesday 28 to Friday 31 August 2018

Oliver!

Anstruther & District Amateur Musical Society
The Byre Theatre, St Andrews
Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 September 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Rent

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society
Motherwell Theatre
Wednesday 12 to Saturday 15 September 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

High School Musical

Leven Amateur Musical Association
The Centre, Leven
Thursday 13 to Saturday 15 September 2018

Les Misérables (School Edition)

Thomson-Leng Musical Society
Gardyne Theatre, Dundee
Wednesday 19 to Saturday 22 September 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Oklahoma!

Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association
Rothes Halls, Glenrothes
Tuesday 25 to Saturday 29 September 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Avenue Q

Downfield Musical Society
The Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Wednesday 26 to Saturday 29 September 2018

One Night Only

Minerva Youth Theatre
Eastwood Park Theatre, Glasgow
Saturday 29 September 2019 (matinee & evening)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Loudoun Musical Society
Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock
Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 October 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Pantheon Club
King's Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 9 to Saturday 13 October 2018

Thoroughly Modern Millie

Hamilton Operatic & Dramatic Club
Motherwell Concert Hall
Tuesday 9 to Saturday 13 October 2018

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Summer Holiday

Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions
Linlithgow Academy Theatre
Monday 15 to Saturday 20 October 2018

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Thomson-Leng Musical Society
Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Wednesday 17 to Saturday 20 October 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Disney Little Mermaid Jr

Project Theatre
Falkirk Town Hall
Tuesday 23 to Wednesday 24 October 2018

Crazy For You

Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society
Falkirk Town Hall
Tuesday 30 October to Saturday 3 November 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Cats

St Patrick's Amateur Opera Group
Brian Duguid Theatre, Livingston
Tuesday 6 to Saturday 10 November 2018

Oliver!

Our Lady's Musical Society
Motherwell Theatre
Tuesday 6 to Saturday 10 November 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Sleeping Beauty

Eyemouth & District Community Youth Theatre
Eyemouth Old High School Hall
Wednesday 7 to Saturday 10 November 2018

Cinderella (Jules Massenet)

Fife Opera
Adam Smith Theatre, Kirkcaldy
Wednesday 7 to Saturday 10 November 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

ACE Chorus Entertains

Artistic Concert Experiences
SEC Armadillo, Glasgow
Saturday 17 November 2018

Sleeping Beauty

Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth
Eastwood Park Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 20 to Saturday 24 November 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Alice in Wonderland

Greenhills Pantomime Society
Village Theatre, East Kilbride
Wednesday 28 November to Saturday 1 December 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Beauty and the Beast – The Pantomime

Airdrie Arts Guild Drama Group
Sir John Wilson Town Hall, Airdrie
Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 December 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Robin Hood

Ury Players
Stonehaven Town Hall
Wednesday 5 to Saturday 8 December 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Sleeping Beauty Pantomime

Cumnock Area Musical Productions Society
Cumnock Town Hall
Wednesday 5 to Saturday 8 December 2018 (Matinee on Saturday)

Dick Whittington

Downfield Musical Society
The Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Friday 14 to Friday 21 December 2018 (Matinees on Saturday and Sunday)

9 to 5 – The Musical

Cupar Amateur Musical Society
Corn Exchange, Cupar
Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 February 2019

Hairspray

Minerva Youth Theatre
Eastwood Park Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 February 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Dear Brutus

Threepenny Theatricals
Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh
Thursday 7 to Saturday 9 February 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

My Fair Lady

Paisley Musical & Operatic Society
King's Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 19 to Saturday 23 February 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Hairspray

HAOS
Hawick Town Hall
Monday 11 to Saturday 16 March 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society
Sir John Wilson Town Hall, Airdrie
Tuesday 12 to Saturday 16 March 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

The Addams Family, A New Musical

Dundee Operatic Society
Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Wednesday 20 to Saturday 23 March 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Cats

Pantheon Club
King's Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 30 April to Saturday 4 May 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Evita

Windmill Productions
Rutherglen Town Hall, Glasgow
Tuesday 11 to Saturday 15 June 2019 ((Matinee on Saturday)

Jesus Christ Superstar

Hamilton Operatic & Dramatic Club
Motherwell Concert Hall
Tuesday 22 to Saturday 26 October 2019

West Side Story

Pantheon Club
King's Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 November 2019

**NODA was formed in 1899 and has enjoyed 118
years of service to amateur theatre.**

NODA SCOTLAND MAGAZINE

**Please e-mail material for inclusion in the November 2018
edition by Wednesday 31 October to the Regional Editor at
alan.jones@noda.org.uk**

Stay up to date with all our latest news by following us on

Facebook www.facebook.com/NationalOperaticDramaticAssociation/

and Twitter www.twitter.com/NODAtweets/

Note to Secretaries:

**Please send a copy of the *NODA Scotland Magazine* to all
members of your society to ensure that everyone is up to
date.**