



noda

Be inspired by amateur theatre

NODA SCOTLAND

Magazine

National Operatic and Dramatic Association
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Patrons: The Lord Lloyd Webber & Connie Fisher.



The past few months have been busy for the members of the NODA Scotland Committee.

Liz Daniels (Regional Rep – District 1) has now completed the new factsheet on the Licensing of Children in Theatre. The factsheet specifically covers the legislation as it applies in Scotland and is available to download from the members' area of the NODA website. Thanks to Liz for all her hard work in pulling this together. Please do not hesitate to contact her if you have any specific questions or queries.

As NODA Councillor I have been delighted to deliver two Business of Amateur Theatre workshops to members of Districts 1, 4 and 5. These workshops have been designed to help those tasked with running amateur theatre clubs and covered a range of topics including governance, budgeting and marketing. A separate presentation covering the Licensing of Children in Theatre was delivered at each of the workshops by Liz Daniels. All those who attended got a great deal from the day and welcomed the opportunity to network with other NODA members. A number of further workshops are currently being planned for later in the year – please contact your Regional Rep if you would be interested in attending.

Over the past two months NODA Scotland in conjunction with H-Arts have delivered five Dare to Dream workshops for our youth members. These workshops were well received with overwhelmingly positive feedback from those who attended. The committee will now review all the feedback as we plan the next stage of our youth development training.

The NODA Scotland Committee is very aware of the continuing financial pressures that amateur theatre in Scotland faces especially in relation to ever increasing theatre hire charges. The Committee is also aware that all too often amateur theatre doesn't get the recognition it deserves from local and national government for the contribution it makes to the Scottish economy and the wider cultural landscape in Scotland. In order to try to address this, your Regional Rep will be in touch with each member club to gather some information that will help NODA Scotland to engage at the highest level to try to address this imbalance and gain the recognition amateur theatre rightly deserves.

My show visits for this half of the year have now drawn to a close. Since January Robbie and I have visited 50 shows and covered over 5000 miles on NODA business. Congratulations to all those clubs we have visited for the warm welcome and for maintaining the very high standard of productions across the country. My diary is already filling up well into next year so please do invite us well in advance of your show to ensure where possible we can attend.

Bookings for this year's NODA Scotland conference are now open and full details can be found elsewhere in the Magazine or can be downloaded from the NODA website: <https://www.noda.org.uk/regions/scotland/noda-scotland-conference-2019> The NODA Scotland Committee and I look forward to welcoming members from all over Scotland to Peebles Hydro for a weekend of workshops, networking and entertainment.

On behalf of the Committee I wish all our members an enjoyable summer and I hope you manage to recharge the theatrical batteries ready to face the new session with renewed energy and focus.

Stuart McCue-Dick, Councillor

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 successive 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 **Thursday 31 October 2019**. Earlier receipt of material will be welcome.

NODA SCOTLAND COMMITTEE

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

Councillor	Stuart McCue-Dick
District No 1 (Glasgow Area)	Elizabeth Daniels
District No 2 (Dundee & Perthshire) Minute Secretary	Roger Buist
District No 3 (Central Scotland)	Elizabeth Donald
District No 4 (Renfrewshire, Ayrshire & Bute)	Craig Inglis
District No 5 (Lanarkshire)	David Black
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District No 7 (Fife) & Membership Secretary	Mike Pendlowski
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District No 9 (Grampian & Highland)	Douglas Clark
District No 10 (Angus & Kincardine) & Awards Secretary	Gordon Smith
District No 11 (South West Scotland) & Treasurer	Stewart Cameron
Youth Adviser	Calum Campbell
Web Manager	Vacancy (covered by Councillor)
Editor	Alan C Jones

NODA TODAY

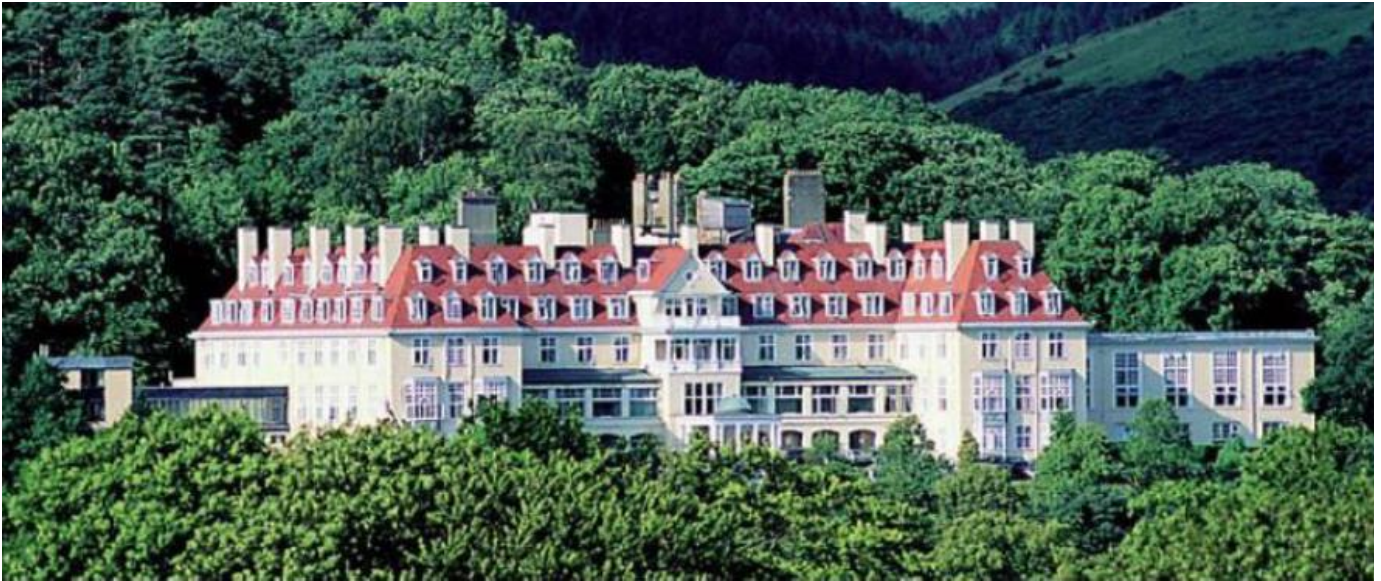
NODA Today is a UK-wide magazine published in April, August and November.

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 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 2019 edition are welcomed from societies and individual members and should be submitted by e-mail to the Editor by **Friday 13 September 2019**. Earlier receipt of material will be welcome.

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.

NODA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 2019
25 – 27 OCTOBER
PEEBLES HYDRO



Once again, the weekend has a varied programme of workshops, a gala dinner with guest speaker, midnight cabaret and late-night sing-along as well as the results of the programme and poster competition. There will also be a varied mix of theatrical suppliers and rights holders exhibiting all weekend and plenty of opportunities to network with members from all over Scotland, as well as meeting NODA President Christine Hunter Hughes (NODA North West) and Chief Operating Officer Dale Freeman.

By the time of the Conference 120 of the 130 bedrooms will have been refurbished which is great news.

Throughout the weekend Peebles Hydro has designed a package of drinks promotions including spirits, wine, prosecco and exclusive NODA beer. Full details will be included with your Conference confirmation. Confirmations will be sent by email from 1 September so there is no need to include a return envelope with your booking.

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. 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

Full details including a booking form are available on the NODA website:
<https://www.noda.org.uk/regions/scotland/noda-scotland-conference-2019>

The NODA Scotland Committee look forward to welcoming you all to Peebles Hydro in October.

Any questions just ask.

Stuart McCue-Dick
NODA Scotland Councillor, 07710 487385

NODA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE

25 - 27 October 2019

Peebles Hydro

AGM

Workshops - movement, drama, good to talk,
stage management and licensing of children in theatre

Gala Dinner with guest speaker

Programme and Poster Competition

Theatrical Suppliers and Rights Holder Stands

Late night sing-a-long



Booking now open. For full details: www.noda.org.uk/regions/scotland

NODA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 25 TO 27 OCTOBER 2019

PEEBLES HYDRO

Notice of Annual General Meetings:

The Annual General Meetings of NODA Scotland Region and noda Scotland will be held within the Ballroom of the Peebles Hydro, Innerleithen Road, Peebles, EH45 8LX, on Sunday 27 October 2019 at 11.00 (prompt). This will be followed by the presentation of trophies to the winners of the Programme and Poster Competition.

** Notice of any competent business for consideration at either of the meetings should be in the hands of Roger Buist, 5 Bayfield Gardens, West Ferry, Dundee, DD5 1AX not later than 6 October 2019.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER

15.00	Check in Opens
18.45	Reception for all Delegates and Guests You are invited to meet President Christine Hunter Hughes in the Ballroom
19.30	Dinner in the Dining Room
21.00	Dancing in the Ballroom
	Disco in the Manor Room
00.00	Sing-Song & Karaoke in the Bar

SATURDAY 26 OCTOBER

10.00 to 12.00	Music Class 1 - Richard Waghorn The Regency Room Movement Class 1 - Greg Robertson The Ballroom Drama Class 1 - Tri Cumming The Edinburgh Suite Stage Management Part 1 - Gail Pallin The Sun Lounge
10.30 to 12.00	It's Good To Talk - Dorothy Johnstone & David Black The Bannockburn Room
12.30 to 14.00	Lunch In The Dining Room
14.30 to 16.30	Music Class 2 - Richard Waghorn The Regency Room Movement Class 2 - Kenny Christie The Ballroom Drama Class 2 - Tri Cumming The Edinburgh Suite Stage Management Part 2 - Gail Pallin The Sun Lounge Licensing of Children in Theatre - Liz Daniels The Bannockburn Room
19.00	Gala Dinner in the Dining Room All Guests must be seated by 18.50 Evening or Highland Dress should be worn Strictly no denims or casual attire Dancing in the Ballroom
00.00	Midnight Cabaret in the Ballroom followed by Sing-Song & Karaoke in the Bar

SUNDAY 27 OCTOBER

11.00	Annual General Meeting of NODA Scotland followed by noda Scotland
12.00	Presentation of Awards for the Programme and Poster Competition
12.30 to 14.30	Lunch in the Dining Room
	The Conference Closes 'Safe Journey Home'

CONFERENCE CHARGES

Conference Fee – £20.00 per person

The conference fee is payable by anyone booking any package other than the Gala Dinner, Ball and Cabaret ticket or attending any part of the weekend apart from the AGM.

Weekend Package includes:

Two nights accommodation in the Hydro or Park Hotels inclusive of all meals from dinner on Friday to lunch on Sunday. This is inclusive of the Gala Dinner, Service Charges and VAT. No Reductions.

Rates per Person payable to Hotel on departure:

Single Room.....	£ 286.00
Double/Twin Room.....	£ 275.00 (2 sharing)
Triple Room.....	£ 258.50 (3 sharing)
Multiple Room.....	£ 235.00 (4+ sharing)

Gala Dinner, Ball & Cabaret Ticket..... £54.50 per person
(for NON residents of the Hydro or Park Hotels)

Gala Dinner & Ball Overnight Package

(Including: Gala Dinner, Ball, Cabaret, Bed & Breakfast)

Single Room.....	£ 120.00
Double/Twin Room.....	£ 114.00

Extra Nights

Dinner, Bed and Breakfast £ 60.50 per person

Non-residents

Friday Dinner.....	£25.00
Saturday Lunch.....	£ 16.00
Sunday Lunch.....	£26.00

WORKSHOP DETAILS

MUSIC CLASS 1

Richard returns once again with a fast-paced singing workshop. He will take you through one of his own new, fresh and exciting arrangements from the world of musical theatre making for a proper vocal workout. Throw in some technical singing tips, fun but invaluable exercises and lots of good humour and this workshop will have you sounding tip-top and is not to be missed.

MUSIC CLASS 2

In something a little different this workshop will take the format of a master class. Up to 10 of you will get a chance to work one to one with Richard on a song of your choice. Others are welcome to sit and watch Richard as he offers invaluable tips in a safe and supportive environment.

MOVEMENT CLASS 1 & 2

Greg (am) and Kenny (pm) will offer an exciting, fun, energetic, inspirational and high energy workshop using music from the world of musical theatre. They will put you through your paces in workshop sessions that will provide appropriate levels of challenge but most importantly enjoyment for all!

Greg is a freelance choreographer who currently works with a number of groups in and around Glasgow with recent shows including My Fair Lady, The Music Man, Avenue Q and Chicago.

Kenny is based in Dundee and works with groups in Tayside, Fife and beyond with recent shows including Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Evita, 42nd Street and Cats.

DRAMA CLASS 1 - MAKING A SCENE!

How do you tap in to the natural flair for the dramatic that the young people you work with are desperate to explore? Aimed at those with youth companies and groups, we will use practical, physical theatre and movement based activities, music and character development to create a dramatic scene which will bring some fresh ideas to your work with young people. Working together and tapping into your inner teenager, the session will focus on the fun of 'having a drama' and turning it into a gripping piece of instant theatre.

DRAMA CLASS 2 - WHAT DO WE WANT? MOTIVATION! WHEN DO WE WANT IT...? NOW!

In this fun session aimed at actors in straight plays or musical theatre, we will use simple exercises and scripted extracts to explore the idea of what motivates the characters we play. How can we enhance our performances by raising the stakes, changing our tactics and overcoming our obstacles to create believable and human characters in both comedy and drama?

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Session One - Role of Stage Manager in Rehearsal & Performance

SM in rehearsal, Rehearsal room preparation, Propping process, SM in performance, Risk assessments, Running backstage safely and effectively

This workshop will discuss the production process and the role of the stage management team in preparing the rehearsal room to enable and support the performer's rehearsal. We will also provide guidance on H&S aspects of performance and how to construct an effective risk assessment which assists in providing a safe environment for performers backstage.

Session Two - Role of DSM in Rehearsal & Performance

DSM in rehearsal, Blocking techniques (how to notate actors moves in the rehearsal room), Creating rehearsal notes & rehearsal calls, Creating setting and running plots, DSM in performance, Layout of the prompt copy, Training in show calling techniques

This workshop will invite participants to make up their own prompt copy and cue a short play using new training software 'CallQ'. The software interacts with a video of a production played in real time and emulates a prompt desk by rendering a set of stand-by and go cue lights on the keyboard, which the participant uses to cue the show using their prompt copy.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

A chance to meet with representatives of clubs from all over Scotland to share ideas and seek solutions to problems. You will also be updated on initiatives being taken by NODA to help support amateur theatre and those tasked with running member clubs.

LICENCING OF CHILDREN IN THEATRE

Having produced a new factsheet covering this very important topic Liz will take you through an interactive workshop to ensure you comply with the current rules and regulations with regards to children appearing in future productions.

LONG SERVICE AWARDS: 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).**



60 Year Diamond Bar

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

Ruby McWhinnie
Pat Mulvaney

55 Year Pin

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society
Inverness Musical Theatre Company
Inverness Musical Theatre Company
Perth Amateur Operatic Society

Elizabeth M M Donald
Louise Munro
Maureen Pringle
Jennifer Melville

50 Year Medal

Cupar Amateur Musical Society

Joan Wood

50 Year Gold Bar

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

Dorothy Peterson

45 year Silver Bar

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Leven Amateur Musical Association
Leven Amateur Musical Association

Ian Davidson
Sandra Gordon
Linda Shipman

45 year Badge

Inverness Musical Theatre Company

Stella Reynolds

40 year Silver Bar

Kelty Musical Association
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Tayside Opera

Lindsay Black
Monica Holland
Lorraine Beggs
Philip Kearns

40 Year Badge

Ayrshire Philharmonic Operatic Society
Inverness Musical Theatre Company
Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association
Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association
Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association

Shona Quayle
George Reynolds
Jean Ferguson
Stephanie Hoey
Moirra Neilson

35 year Silver Bar

Cupar Amateur Musical Society
Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Leven Amateur Musical Association
Southern Light Opera Company
Southern Light Opera Company

Allison Lumsden
Keith Belleville
Morag Hay
Amanda Wilson
Derek Langley
Irene Rex
Sheila Whelan

30 year Silver Bar

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society
Dundee Scout Gang Show
Falkirk Operatic Society
Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth
Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
Larbert Amateur Operatic Society

Anne H Smith
Sheila Walker
William Cunningham
Lorna Wyllie
Angela Barber
Elizabeth Belleville
Alexander Forbes

30 year Silver Bar

Southern Light Opera Company

Judith Walker

30 Year Badge

Ayr Amateur Opera Company

Janice McKellar

25 Year Long Service Medal

Alyth Musical Society

Glenda Kean

Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society

Claire Bell

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

Margaret Mackenzie

Leven Amateur Musical Association

Fiona Johnson

Southern Light Opera Company

Patricia Law

Southern Light Opera Company

Sheila Sneddon

25 Year Badge

Ayr Amateur Opera Company

Lynsey Kerr

Ayr Amateur Opera Company

Elizabeth Veitch

Inverness Musical Theatre Company

Mairi Mackenzie

Inverness Musical Theatre Company

Carol Robertson

Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association

Yvonne Tait

20 Year Badge

Ayr Amateur Opera Company

Wendy Cannell

Ayrshire Philharmonic Operatic Society

Colin McDonald

Cupar Amateur Musical Society

Graham Lumsden

Dundee Scout Gang Show

James Jenkins

Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth

Richard Kelly

Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society

Pamela Fraser

Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society

Alexina Hamilton

Kelty Musical Association

Hollie Wegner-Jaskin

Lanark Amateur Musical Society

Andrew Kerr

Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association

Dougal Affleck

15 Year Badge

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society

Iain Campbell

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society

Susan Campbell

Ayr Amateur Opera Company

David Cannell

Ayr Amateur Opera Company

Michael McCabe

Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society

Vicki Lorimer

Falkirk Operatic Society

Amy Sutherland

Inverness Musical Theatre Company

Cana Kelly

Kelty Musical Association

Laura Sinclair

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

Barbara Barker

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society

Donna Grieve

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society

Keith Watson

Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association

Lia Tazioli

Perth Amateur Operatic Society

Gillian Martin

Perth Amateur Operatic Society

Lisa McNicol

10 Year Badge

Ayr Amateur Opera Company

Sarah Keary

10 Year Badge

Ayrshire Philharmonic Operatic Society
 Ayrshire Philharmonic Operatic Society
 Ayrshire Philharmonic Operatic Society
 Cupar Amateur Musical Society
 Cupar Amateur Musical Society
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth
 Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth
 Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth
 Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
 Lanark Amateur Musical Society
 Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
 Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
 Minerva Club Glasgow
 St Andrews Musical Society

Adam Dawson
 Nicola Hume
 Yvonne Sheehan
 Gary Smith
 Linda Whiteford
 Kathleen Forbes
 Susan Grubb
 Ian Hunt
 Brodie Mulholland
 Beth Cameron
 Katy Carey
 Ewan Pringle
 Andrew Caldwell
 Vikki McIntyre
 John Coe
 Michelle Weston
 Claire Marie Brown
 Hannah Nicholls

Commendation Award

Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Dundee Scout Gang Show
 Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions
 Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions

Alice Jenkins
 Gregor Murray
 Stuart Ramsay
 Paul Smith
 Hamish Strachan
 Lesley Easton
 Ian Scott

Youth Award

Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association

Lily McLean Morrison

Youth Certificate

Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association - Youth
 Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
 Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
 Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions
 Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions
 Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions

Joel Allsopp
 Kirsty Crabb
 Eva Deas
 Lauchlan Graham
 Mia Jones
 Niall Jowitt
 Lily Mentiplay
 Mhairi Morrison
 Daniel Scott
 Chloe Hendry
 Robyn McKinnon
 Lisa Bain
 Anna Bremner
 Charlotte Casey

Youth Certificate

Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Josh Cunningham
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Erin Fowler
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Molly Fraser
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Libby Hardie
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Saoirse Homan
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Mhairi Love
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Abbie Mason
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Caitlin McCusker
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Freya Nicoll
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Isla Paton
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Alice Petersen
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Annie Priestly
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Feorghas Wakefield
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association	Emillie Grigg
Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association	Chloe Vangesa

YOUNG PERFORMERS TAKING PART IN AMATEUR THEATRE

Following requests from members NODA Scotland has prepared a factsheet outlining the requirements for licensing children in theatrical productions. The factsheet is now available to download from the NODA website. Simply login and download.

Thanks to Liz Daniels (District 1) for all her hard work in pulling the factsheet together and for a number of members throughout the country who have fed into the process.

Stuart McCue-Dick, Councillor

NODA Scotland has recently published the factsheet *Young performers taking part in amateur theatre*.

The information already laid out in the article relating to England and Wales is relevant across UK. However, in Scotland there are a few publications that are helpful to read alongside all of the information provided. No matter where children live in the UK, performing in the theatre should be no different for them with regard to their wellbeing, and any requirements for the need to seek a licence for them to perform.

Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) - *The national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of our children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people*, published *Getting it Right For Young Performers - Guidance on the revised arrangements for ensuring the wellbeing of children involved in licensed activities*. This guidance, along with *Young Performers – A guide for parents and guardians* (August 2017), *The Children (Performances and Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2014* (in force from February 2015) and the *Children and Young Persons Act 1963 section 37 (3)*, has assisted us in the development of our fact sheet for Scotland.

As well as developing the fact sheet, an approach we have taken in Scotland is to develop a presentation based on the relevant points in the legislation, and provide access to the supporting documents. The presentation now forms part of the Business of Amateur Theatre workshops that are currently being rolled out across Scotland. As well as the presentation a number of scenarios have been developed which test the knowledge and understanding of the workshop participants following the presentation. The NODA Scotland Committee received the presentation and worked through the scenarios at their recent meeting. This was received well, and the Regional Representatives feel more equipped to discuss the guidance, and support the clubs within their own district. The presentation and scenario group work will be run as a workshop at the NODA Scotland Conference in Peebles from 25 to 27 October 2019.

As our factsheet states, "Amateur theatre is a fun hobby involving both adults and children. Best practice is to follow the legislation that is in place to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people. Never assume that children do not require a licence to perform. It is easier to ask the question than to find out too late that the legislation has not been followed. Last but not least, if in doubt always ask your Local Authority."

Liz Daniels, Regional Representative, District No 1

THE BORDER STUDIO

www.borderstudio.com
info@borderstudio.com

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DESIGN TO INSPIRE



WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A SET?

With a huge catalogue to choose from and complete flexibility, we are here to collaborate with you, provide inspiration and new ideas, and work with you to create beautiful, thoughtfully designed sets that are bespoke to your space and budget requirements.

Get in touch with us today & let's discuss how we can elevate your next show with a set that will really communicate with your audience.

What do our customers have to say?

"The set was stunning and really made our panto out of this world. Thank you for all your hard work, we couldn't have done it without you"

Paul Harding, Leeds LIDOS

"I can't thank The Border Studio enough for their help and the fabulous set they have provided for our production of Spamalot. The quality of the set and props are superb."

Michelle Coulson, Dryburn Theatrical Workshop

We will certainly be dealing with you the next time we need a backcloth rather than anyone else - they were excellent quality but more significantly, I think your customer service is absolutely amazing.

Ben Jeffreys, Westcliff High School for Boys

WHAT'S NEW?

CHICAGO

made in Dagenham THE MUSICAL

BETTY BLUE EYES

TOP HAT

The Wind in the Willows

ENQUIRE NOW FOR:

SHREK THE MUSICAL

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

Glasgow Light Opera Club

presents by arrangement with Theatrical Rights Worldwide

*A Shakespearean story adapted
by Joe DiPietro.
Inspired by and featuring the songs
of ELVIS PRESLEY ®*

SHOONK

Inspired by and featuring the songs of ELVIS PRESLEY ®

Book by JOE DIPIETRO

Originally Produced on Broadway by Jonathan Pollard, Bernie Kukoff, Clear Channel Entertainment, Harbor Entertainment, Miramax Films, Bob & Harvey Weinstein, Stanley Buchthal, Eric Falkenstein, Nina Essman/Nancy Nagel Gibbs, Jean Cheever, Margaret Cotter, in association with Barney Rosenzweig, Meri Krassner, FGRW Investments, Karen Jason, Phil Ciasullo Conard. Originally produced for Goodspeed Musicals, Michael P. Price, Executive Producer, Sue Frost, Associate Producer.

Glasgow Light Opera Club is a Scottish charitable Incorporated Organisation Charity No: SC043791

 **THE 23rd - 26th October 2019**
KING'S
GLASGOW

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or www.atgtickets.com/glasgow

*Calls cost 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge





THE LYRIC CLUB
PRESENT

LEGALLY BLONDE

The Musical

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY LAURENCE O'KEEFE AND NEIL BENJAMIN
BOOK BY HEATHER HACH
BASED ON NOVEL BY AMANDA BROWN AND THE
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER MOTION PICTURE

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KING'S
GLASGOW**

19TH - 23RD MAY 2020

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CALLS COST UP TO 7P PER MINUTE PLUS YOUR PHONE COMPANY'S ACCESS CHARGE

THIS AMATEUR PRODUCTION IS PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH MUSIC-THEATRE INTERNATIONAL (EUROPE).
ALL AUTHORISED PERFORMANCE MATERIALS ARE ALSO SUPPLIED BY MTI EUROPE WWW.MTISHOWS.CO.UK



PANTHEON'S THREE SHOW YEAR

The Pantheon Club Glasgow are half way through their THREE SHOW YEAR:

- *Cats*
- *Smalltown*
- *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Pantheon has over 95 years of experience staging large scale productions in Glasgow's biggest theatres and is Glasgow's largest non-professional theatre organisation and we stage two to three shows per year in venues across the city. Major productions are usually performed at The King's Theatre.

Following the recent success of *Cats*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Elf: The Musical*, *Spamalot*, *Legally Blonde*, *Sister Act* and *Grease*, Pantheon returned to a more intimate venue with *Lovers*, *Urinetown*, *Men Should Weep* and *Into The Woods* in the last two years, Pantheon are back at Websters Theatre Glasgow in 2019 with *Smalltown* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* this autumn.

CATS

The Pantheon production of *Cats* at the King's Theatre Glasgow this spring was absolutely mesmerizing and truly stunning, with choreography and direction by Chris J S Wilson, musical direction by Kieran Young, lighting design by Jonnie Clough (Blue Parrot Theatre & Live Events), bespoke costume design and make up design by Emma Leigh Porter and June Young at That Looks Good, photography by Lewis Milne Photography and produced by Pantheon's president David Robertson.

SMALLTOWN

Smalltown is a dark, dynamic and delightfully outrageous wee Scottish comedy telling the story of what happens when contaminated water ('Rabbie Juice') causes extraordinary events to happen to ordinary people, unleashing all sorts of comedic carnage along the way; from rag-dolling on Girvan beach, to the release of animal passions in Stewarton, to the containment of a Zombie in a freezer in an Ardrossan café. Find yourself trapped in three separate stories of Smalltown life, before you, the audience, vote to decide how the story ends; making for a truly memorable evening of entertainment with partial nudity, marsupial violence and zombie vomit! What's not to love? At Websters Theatre Glasgow from 8 to 12 October 2019 (Recommended age 14+ due to explicit material and strong language throughout... oh and the Zombie in a freezer!)

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Pantheon's next musical will be the side-splittingly hilarious, wildly unpredictable and heart-warmingly endearing *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, the story of a group of socially awkward teenage rejects battling it out for the title of best speller in Putnam County. Catch the big event at Websters Theatre Glasgow from 12 to 16 November 2019. It's going to be one hell of a showdown!

- <https://webstersglasgow.com/events/smalltown-2019-10-08/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/events/283101719271974/>



David Cooke, Pantheon Club, Glasgow

Clydebank Musical Society: Oliver!

Director: Roy McGregor; Musical Director: Bethany Logan; Choreographer: Carolyn Anderson

It was a pleasure to be invited to Clydebank Musical Society's production of *Oliver!* The show opened with great energy from a fantastic chorus of twenty-eight children well drilled in seeking food, and imagining just how good it would be if it was something special they were getting to eat. The introduction of Oliver played by Euan Reid had us eating out of the palm of his hand from his initial introduction as a workhouse boy. There was a strong cast of principals, a mix of people who were new to the world of amateur theatre performance, and others who were well seasoned at it. However, everyone worked as hard as each other to ensure this show was well received by the audience. The story was well told by all, and all the principals showed their own strengths in their individual performances. Roy McGregor, Director, and Carolyn Anderson, Choreographer, brought energy and enthusiasm to the stage. Lucy Cusick (Nancy) displayed vocal ability and showed her vulnerable side opposite Bill Sykes who portrayed his role in the true sinister and violent way. Peter Latham gave a good performance of the role of Fagin, and I am sure he will now have caught the musical theatre bug. Without listing all the principals by name, each and every one of them gave a committed and energetic performance adding to the overall success of the production. Working in a hall can bring many challenges, and if there were any then these were not obvious to the audience. The main set was well designed and used creatively to form the different scenes, and the ability to fly cloths was an asset. Making use of the space either side of the stage for a few of the smaller scenes added to the creative handling of the show. I particularly liked the use of lighting and felt that a lot had been made of all the available facilities. The band was well balanced under the direction of Bethany Logan. Carla Valentini, Stage Manager, along with the assistant stage managers and crew ensured that the show ran smoothly from scene to scene. Overall, this was an enjoyable production, where the entire company both on and off the stage worked well together. Well done to all involved in the show.

The Lyric Club: Grease

Director: Alan C Jones; Musical Director: David Fisher; Choreographer: Lynne Bustard

I had the pleasure of attending The Lyric Club's production of *Grease* on opening night. From the very beginning, the show brought energy and vitality to the theatre. It quickly became obvious that this cast had been working hard over the past several months, coming together as a team as well as individually in their own right, to bring a solid performance to the stage. Chloe Minto portrayed the innocent role of Sandy throughout and the dramatic change into "You're the One That I Want" was well executed. The chemistry between Sandy and Danny (Jamie Morrison), was apparent from the beginning. Both Jamie and Chloe played out their own stories to their teen groups, Danny giving an exaggerated story of the relationship, while Sandy kept her real thoughts on the romantic side to the summer love affair. In each of the gangs, the characters had their own story to tell, and each of them was portrayed admirably. Frenchy, played by Jen McGuire, laments at what to do with her life after dropping out of beauty school. "Mooning", by Brendan Casey playing the role of Roger Rump, kept the audience well entertained. A particular highlight in "There Are Worse Things I Could Do" by Rizzo, (Marie-Anne McGrattan), brought a solid powerful performance showing emotional balance. The show could not be complete without an extremely high energy and talented ensemble. Choreography by Lynne Bustard was slick and precise, and it was easy to see the amount of detail and work that had gone into the rehearsals. It is always an undertaking to ensure a production of this scale is well planned and organized. Under the capable artistic direction of Alan C Jones the show ran smoothly, with dramatic light and shade showing through the many characters and scenes. David Fisher led a tight band with excellent communication between the pit and the stage. Click track was used to enhance some of the musical performance in the show. However, the use of click track for all the ensemble numbers would have given a stronger balance of sound. No show runs fully smoothly without the trusted stage crew, and credit must go to both The Lyric Club crew under the stage management of Stuart Poole and The King's Theatre stage crew who ensured that scenes ran effortlessly into each other. It just leaves me to congratulate the entire team at The Lyric Club including the tireless work of Graeme Southwood, Club President, his committee and professional team who brought this energetic show to the stage. Rydell High gets an A + from me!

The Pantheon Club: Cats

Director & Choreographer: Chris Stuart Wilson; Musical Director: Kieran Young

The atmosphere was present as soon as you entered the auditorium, sat down and began to observe the stage and preshow lighting. This was a memorable visit to a show and every aspect of the production from top to toe was well thought-out and executed. Where to start is really a difficult question, but the initial cat's eyes that appeared as the music started took us on a magnificent journey of storytelling through music, voice and dance. It is difficult to single out any particular cast member as they were all of a high standard, and the creativity applied to this performance shone in every aspect of the show. It was clear to see that well before the show hit the rehearsal rooms that lengthy discussions would have taken place to decide on the theatrical performance that was to wow the audiences in Glasgow. The creative team – Chris Stuart Wilson, Director & Choreographer, and Kieran Young, Musical Director, brought their talents to bear as we saw the story of the cats unfold. The very talented cats worked hard and interpreted the tales of their lives through

dramatic dance and song. I don't recall a moment throughout this performance when the stage wasn't displaying the many talents of the cast. The level of clever direction and in particular new and fresh choreography brought the stage to life. As said by David Robertson, President, in his opening remarks in the programme, The Pantheon Club (Glasgow) had to create a completely new set and costume plot for their production. Not being allowed to replicate the original award-winning design of *Cats*, Chris Stuart Wilson created a whole new performance experience. This is where the creative team comes in. His work alongside costume and make up designer, Emma Leigh Porter and Jonnie Clough, set and lighting designer, transported us to a dilapidated London theatre, creating the Jellicle ball. All of this ensured the vision for the overall production was executed to a high standard. Alongside the creative design team, the team at That Looks Good costumes, set construction by Big House Events and Scenery, and lighting and sound by Blue Parrot ensured that the whole atmosphere was created to execute Chris's vision of the overall production. The work of the many dedicated people involved off stage cannot go unmentioned, and the people in the wider production team and others acknowledged in the programme, ensured *Cats* brought a high performance value to the theatre.

Runway Theatre Company: The Music Man

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

Following a very warm welcome, we were straight into a great night of musical theatre entertainment from Runway with this gem of a show, *The Music Man*. A show not done often, this cast really brought it to life and with the very talented cast, the audience were taken back to 1912, River City Iowa. The opening piece displayed a talented group of men, who pulled off an extremely difficult rhythmic, unaccompanied well articulated display as they journeyed in the train. I would have to say that this opening number was really faultless with every word heard as clear as a bell – not to mention the well timed body movements portraying the flow and rhythm of the train. It was a real treat to see Robert Fyfe in his cameo role in the opening section of the show. Arriving in River City took us to the introduction of the many townspeople, each bringing their own stories and characters to life. It was a delight to see Brendan Lynch playing Harold Hill, bringing his triple talent in singing, acting and dance to the stage. The interpretation of "(Ya Got) Trouble" was exemplary; the audience missed none of the story told in this extremely fast paced patter song. We enjoyed the performance throughout the show of his partner in crime Marcellus Washburn, played by J Campbell Kerr, who brought just the right level of humour to the role. Catherine Mackenzie playing the role of Marion displayed her vocal ability and acting with great ease in the interpretation of the role. The blend of both Catherine and Brendan's vocals was one that you don't get the pleasure of experiencing too often. The talented barbershop quartet, Tom Russell, Bob McDevitt, Ross Nicol and Cameron Leask, worked well together with ease, and made it sound as if they had been singing barbershop as a group for most of their stage career. They were equally matched by the five ladies who took us on a journey through "Pickalittle (Talk-A-Little)" with fun, and joined by a great ensemble, it was great to watch and listen to the tittle-tattle of women. The Mayor, Will Pollock, and his wife Eulalie, Lindsey Ross, worked well opposite each other with their wit and eccentricity in equal parts. You can never fault Will for his excellent comedic timing. The children were well cast and I had the pleasure of seeing Iona, Finlay and Charlotte. Finlay made an excellent job as he developed his character from the shy boy early in the show to be the confident young man having adopted the "Think Method". I have no doubt that Tilda, Layton and Millie also brought their talents to bear in the roles in the alternative performances. The ensemble of children were all well chosen for their talents and I can't help but mention the youngest on the stage and how he knew every word, and move in all the right places – a star in the making. As always, no show would be complete without the hard working ensemble of adults. The harmony in the singing was strong and maintained throughout the show. The band under the direction of David Dunlop was well balanced with the principals and ensemble. Choreography by Greg Robertson was completely stylised for the period of the piece and the famous "Seventy-Six Trombones" was precise and lively. Shows don't happen without the work of the backstage and front of house team and this production was no exception. Smooth scene changes under the direction of Stage Manager Edward Gunn, lighting and sound, wigs, hair, make-up and costumes to name a few, ensured the show had the detail applied that it deserved. With Robert Fyfe in charge of the overall direction and production, this show not often performed, brought the book, music and lyrics of Meredith Wilson to life. Well done Runway on another successful show.

Windmill Productions: Evita

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

Windmill Productions, new to Rutherglen Town Hall, took the hall on a journey from its multi-purpose venue to giving audiences a real intimate theatrical experience. From the opening of the show where we witnessed the funeral of Eva, we were transported back to 1934, where the piece picked up her life. This production brought us the drama through music as the story unfolded telling of the characters in Eva's life and her determination to succeed as the most powerful woman in Argentina. Eva, played by Vanessa Sedgwick, showed her vocal ability in her interpretation of the role. She was supported by Jim McPhee, playing Perón, who brought a wealth of experience to the role, with his vocal ability and drama in equal measure. Raymond Morrison, Magaldi, played the role with ease, and style. The Mistress, Gillian Black, brought real emotion to the famous song *Another Suitcase In Another Hall*, and Chè, played by Martyn Agnew, never lost the characterisation of the role from both a dramatic and vocal sense, displaying his vocal ability in rock singing

when required. The ensemble captured the drama right from the beginning and the audience sensed every part of emotion coming from the cast throughout the production. They worked hard, and the execution of the piece demonstrated the experience of the cast. The entire look of this show was stylised, and in particular the detail of hair, wigs and make-up, and consistency in the period style of the costumes, was evident. The attention to detail really shone through. The band was positioned stage right bringing a very cohesive feel to the whole production. Under the direction of David Fisher, the vocals across the entire cast were tight with excellent harmony singing, and well connected with the band. Choreography by Marie McElhinney was stylised and precise, and while the playing area on the stage was limited, this did not hinder any of the dance and movement throughout the production. From a technical point of view, the set, an open design constructed by Jack Murdoch and designed by Margot Traynor, complemented the production beautifully. Lighting design by Mike Pendlowski brought real atmosphere to the production. The direction of the production was in the capable hands of Alan C Jones, and with a dedicated production team, Windmill rightly say, they are a new production company with a wealth of experience, and credit must be given to them in bringing a show of this standard to the stage.

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

Perth Amateur Operatic Society

NODA Scotland Councillor Stuart McCue-Dick was delighted to be asked to present long service awards to three members of Perth Amateur Operatic Society in April, following their Friday evening performance of *9 to 5 - the Musical*.

(L to R): Gillian Martin (15 years), Jennifer Melville (55 years) and Lisa McNicol (15 years).



Alyth Musical Society: The Sound Of Music
Director & Choreographer: Gemma Pryde; Musical Director: Colin Grant

The hills (around Alyth) were alive with the sound of music because Alyth MS were performing this much-loved musical. All the lovely well-known Rodgers and Hammerstein songs are there, plus the heart-warming tale of the von Trapp family. Postulant nun, Maria, is singing her heart out, unaware that she should be attending prayers! From her first appearance, Claire Mallinson brought Maria beautifully and exactly to life with her effervescent singing and acting and looked to be enjoying every single moment. This role was safe and sound in her hands since she was seldom off the stage and had much singing to do. Opposite her, as the strict disciplinarian (and whistler), Captain Georg von Trapp, father of seven children, found Gerard Cameron turning in a performance that was strong, and we were overjoyed when he found his true love. And, it was pleasant to sing along (under our breath) with his stage family, in the popular "Edelweiss". Marjorie Twivey was a truly understanding Mother Abbess and brought great charm and sympathy to the stage and it was to her that the musical's great anthem fell to "Climb Every Mountain" and she certainly made the most of singing this great refrain as we, the audience, delighted in hearing it sung. Great support came from the other three main nuns – Glenda Kean, Eleanor Love, and Isabel McCurdy – and, with the Mother Abbess, their "Problem Like Maria" was a real joy. Young love blossoms through this show, but has a sad end since the eldest daughter, Liesl, beautifully played by Isla Wands, falls in love with local telegram boy, Rolf, whose admiration for the Nazis ruins his chances! Young Robert Oakes fitted the Rolf role very nicely indeed. Also looking for love, and hoping to marry the Captain, was family friend, Baroness Else Schraeder. She was haughty, with a degree of snobbishness, and Elaine Murray brought her to the stage in great style. Andrew Beckett was the shrewd family friend and music impresario, Max Detweiler, bringing just the right amount of cynicism to his role, determined to get the family to sing at the local music festival. Usually seen in comedy roles, Ron Kirkpatrick was the nasty Gauleiter of the region; Herr Zeller; Valerie Anderson was competent housekeeper Frau Schmidt; and Darren Gracey equally capable as butler Franz. But the real stars of this show were the children, who have much to do, and each one was splendid so, a big well done to Hollie Burns, Jodie Harden, Penny Stephens, Cameron Gracey, Sebastian Kimber, and Dylan Wallace. Travelling home, one was definitely singing the songs after this performance!

Downfield Musical Society: Barnum
Director & Choreographer: Ross Lesslie; Musical Director: Paul Clancy

The Greatest Show On Earth arrived in town this week – which means the circus has arrived, courtesy of PT Barnum, the Prince of Humbug! For weeks the Society members had been honing their circus skills, all to good effect since from the show's opening their talents were all on view in this circus extravaganza! It takes a special kind of guy to play Barnum and Marcus Wylie had it all in bucket loads! He oozed confidence. His versatility was endless – in manner, acting, speech, and dynamic enthusiasm, and in all his great singing numbers such as "There Is A Sucker Born Every Minute". But the highlight of his performance is the much-anticipated (and feared) tightrope walk on the high wire across the stage, suspended at some height. Marcus's concentration was evident, as everybody momentarily hushed in awe, and the silence in the theatre was electric as he carried out this feat ... he almost made it before slipping but, nonplussed, he immediately then climbed up a rope and, hung above the audience, in a frenetic rope spin, bringing the Act I Finale to a memorable close, and to a huge, deserved, ovation! That took nerves of steel! All-rounder and experienced Lynn MacFarlane was the perfect choice to play Charity Barnum and this she did in a refined, caring, understanding, and controlled manner putting up with the many eccentricities of her stage husband. But her two-headed coin was a great asset to her(!) and her tender "Colors Of My Life" was an absolute delight. Then appears one Jenni Lind, a Swedish opera singer, who brings slight turmoil to all the glitz and glamour and – to the Barnums. Claire Wallace had the singing voice (and accent) to carry off her famous "Swedish Nightingale" label and her dialogue with Barnum was hilarious as he attempted to get her to speak English! Barnum "humbled" his audience with "the oldest woman alive"- one Joice Heth, at 160 years of age! Brilliantly played by Marlowe Simpson, she made her mark with her "Thank God I'm Old" song. Also making his mark was Sam Graham's General Tom Thumb in an assured and poised performance, but almost overshadowed by Jumbo, the gigantic elephant! Matthew Millar was the unicycling Ringmaster showing his control on his one wheeled cycle; Graeme Neil Smith was James A. Bailey; and Rebecca Waghorn the "Black And White" blues singer. And to the talented ensemble of ball jugglers, stilt-walkers, ribbon wavers, and tumblers, go congratulations for their circus skills – which, I reckon, they spent strenuous, personal, commitment in hours to achieve! This was a big, gloriously colourful, glitzy, energetic production, with all the big stage numbers cleverly staged throughout. And, yes, we were all "humbled" and "suckered" in true circus fashion – and we enjoyed the experience!

Dundee Scout Association: Gang Show 2019

Director: Stacey McPherson; Musical Director: Richard Waghorn; Choreographers: Aimee Brown, Carla Geekie

The Scout Gang is back again in town bringing with them their own special brand of entertainment. All looking squeaky-clean in their stage white Scout uniforms and red scarves, they took to the stage in their own inimitable style, full of energy, enthusiasm, verve and zest! OK, some of them were "out of step but oor Jock", but this added to the fun and

enjoyment of the show! The show programme was wide and varied and there was something for everyone in its content. The young cast lustily sang through all the big music numbers, among them being a space item entitled "Space – The Final Frontier" and another enjoyable item was "The Toy Box". And you can't go wrong with a *Mama Mia* medley, which had every member of the audience tapping their feet and singing along with them! The was the same with the Gang's excerpt from current London West End musicals, in which we were entertained with new songs from these shows. Everyone appearing in a Gang Show is a star in their own right, but there are always scene stealers in the show! They are the very young Beaver Scouts – and, as they have done before, they got their audience well and truly into the mood of the show. This time their musical subject was "Animals" and it contained a humorous song called "Three Blind Jellyfish", which suited the young ones' talents. And chaos reigned supreme when they got their audience up on their feet to do "The Penguin March"! It was all great fun! Some quiet comedy was also interspersed throughout the main dancing and singing numbers to raise the laughs. The show was a real musical feast and zipped along at a great pace until it reached its unique finale with the Gang all neatly tiered up on rostra in the true GS tradition to sing through the hit songs from the show, culminating in the most famous of all – "Riding Along On The Crest Of A Wave". Gang, you worked your special magic again!

Perth Amateur Operatic Society: 9 to 5

Director: Robert Nee; Musical Director: Joe Whiteman; Choreographer: Robyn Goodfellow

It was just an ordinary day working at Consolidated Industries until three women employees – Violet, Doralee, and Judy – exact revenge on Franklin Hart Jnr, their domineering, lecherous boss. This is a very big show, with strong female characters, and requires three very good women to play the three main roles. And, yes, the Society had them! Take a bow this tip-top, talented, trio of Jane Taylor (Violet), Nicola Hay (Judy), and Bekki Mackenzie (Doralee). They dominated the entire show and worked very well as a team and proved that Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned! Their actions, stage presence, and big song numbers were all first class (and I have to mention Nicola's "Get Out And Stay Out" number was a real belter and deserved the applause, but the same applies to the other two ladies, and, when it came to the murderous fantasy sequence, this trio were all in their element – Nicola as a femme fatale; Bekki's top shot rodeo star; quickly followed by Jane's unbalanced Snow White. Each deserved an Oscar! The cause of their venom was their supercilious, arrogant, and lecherous boss, Franklin Hart Jnr, and Jonathan Cammidge truly made the most of this wonderful role. He really was a super-duper lecher and his big song number "Here For You", with its many visual, sexy connotations was quite something to watch! Unfortunately, this role meant he had to "hang about" for some time, as well! There are many super cameo roles for women and Society stalwart Anne Kemp was totally unrecognizable as Roz, the unpopular office secretary who professes her love for the boss in her "Heart To Hart" song. Lisa Flood-Wallace was fabulous as the always-inebriated Margaret, who made a fantastic transformation with her final appearance! And let's not forget some men – Christie Young was a fine Joe, finding love with Violet in the charming and engaging duet "Let Love Grow"; and Mark Murphy made his mark as Josh. The stage set, with its hidden nooks and crannies hiding the set furniture, was first class and enabled the show to flow slickly. All the big numbers were carried off with great precision by the ensemble and, one question remains – what are PAOS going to follow this successful show with in 2020?!

Tayport Amateur Dramatic & Musical Society: Our House

Director: Kris Mordente; Musical Director: Robert Nee; Choreographer: Darren Handy

Our House is a jukebox musical based, exclusively, on the songs from 1980s group Madness. Joe (Craig Nicoll) performed well in his dual role of Good Joe and Bad Joe, and was given excellent support by his girlfriend Sarah (Carley Mackie) whose singing and dialogue were a pleasure to listen to, especially in their duet "It Must Be Love". Joe is rarely offstage, and, when he is, it is to accomplish a quick change between Good and Bad Joe. Two adult principals, Joe's Mum (Claire Rioch) and Dad (Neil Hutton) bring young Joe's past and present together, especially Dad, who, being deceased, watches his every move from above. Joe's schoolmates, Emmo (Wes Lorimer) and Lewis (Stuart Whyte) together with Sarah's friends, Billie (Chloe Anderson) and Angie (Eilidh Robertson), brought the humorous side of the show to the fore, delivering all their lines with apparent ease and confidence. Each time Joe chooses the "Bad" route, another school friend Reecey (Brodie Thompson) is not far away. Reecey, like all the principals tonight, delivers well – not least of all in "Baggy Trousers". TADAMS chorus were, as usual on top form presenting a performance brimming with energy from the start to the very last encore. Credit must go to Director (Kris Mordente) and Musical Director (Robert Nee) who have put together a show full of life and laughs. Last, but not least, Choreographer (Darren Handy) managed to get the chorus to move especially well, bearing in mind the confines of the Blyth Hall stage. The sound in Act I did lack balance between the band and the singers, the band overpowering on several occasions. However, this was rectified in Act II. The show was well lit by Kieran Hotchkiss, with a particularly effective scene in Vegas at the top of Act II. A simple, two level set, with rotating three-sided columns made for smooth, quick changes between the numerous scenes. Many thanks to TADAMS for allowing me to review your show on behalf of my colleague Roger Buist.

Mike Pendlowski

Thomson-Leng Musical Society: Do You Hear The People Sing?

Director & Musical Director: Billy Muir; Choreographer: Jenni Main

Amateur operatic performers appearing on stage like to sing, and this was precisely what this society set out to do whilst performing this show. Obviously, from its title, everybody was in the mood to sing . . . and sing they did! The audience was taken on a musical journey through shows old and new, with “new” being the operative choice for the evening. Right from the start with its *Greatest Showman* opening we were off on our musical tour, which brought musical melodies from *Witches*, *Waitress*, *Chess*, *Mama Mia*, and *All Shook Up*, which gave us a magical musical sound from the full chorale with their “Can’t Help Falling In Love” number. Another entertaining item was the Disney “Princess Medley” performed by Karla Geekie, Rachel Hogg, Ellen Ryder, Terri Milne and Connie Uribe as the princesses, singing their famed theme songs, integrating throughout with each other in the entire stunning song number. There was also a quick visit to *Hamilton*, and Thomas Richmond and Rebecca Marshall gave us a haunting “Whistle Down The Wind” And so, it went on. Then came the “old” favourites – with the *Guys And Dolls* song selection being a real cracker! And the same can be said with the show’s Finale when Donna Bell and the entire company gave us a truly resounding and moving “You’ll Never Walk Alone” from *Carousel* – a real hair-tingling moment! All the soloists (and there were many of them) are to be congratulated for their part in the evening’s entertainment. And congratulations to MD Billy Muir who played the piano (and sang) on stage throughout the entire evening – he was literally a one-man band! Starring with him were several talented company members who assisted him on occasions and showed their musical prowess on flute and guitar. All very entertaining and, yes, we certainly did hear the people sing!

Thomson-Leng Youth Musical Theatre: TLYMT@21

Musical Director: Billy Muir; Choreographer: Donna Reilly

Tonight’s show was a celebration because it was a Birthday Party! This young, youth theatre company was celebrating 21 years of presenting stage shows and musicals and this present musical entertainment certainly showed the young company’s talents, energy, vocal capabilities, dancing, and . . . smiling faces, as they all set about to entertain their audience to mark this milestone of the society’s history. Simply staged, and with giant lettering – *TLYMT21* – dominating the stage, this was disco lit throughout the entire show, thus providing colour to the production. The company was 41 people strong and covered a vast age range and they performed with a great passion, so much so, that their little / big hearts must have beaten with great pride. And it was a big singing show for the company which meant a lot of words to be learned! The musical programme was vast and wide and contained selections from today’s modern musicals and from some up-to-date London productions. Every single person in this cast, whether young or old, was a star in his, or her, own right and it would be totally wrong for me to name the main singing leads, because every singer appearing on stage truly deserved to be mentioned. And speaking of young leading singers, it totally amazes me the power these young people of today have in their voices! Among the many musical highlights was a great opening selection from *The Lion King*, which got the show off to a great start. Then the tempo changed and off we went into *A Chorus Line* and heard a fabulous “Nothing” song, which was quickly followed by songs from *Bugsy Malone*. Next came a selection of songs from London’s latest and newest show *Waitress*, followed by a cracking *Miss Saigon* selection. *Whistle Down The Wind*, *Shrek*, *Grease*, *Seussical*, all brought forth musical highlights, and then it was the finale! You don’t have to guess what it would be because it was . . . yes, you’ve guessed it – the obligatory *Les Mis*! And what a powerful musical finale this turned out to be. The show flowed slickly and smoothly; the dancing ensemble was spot on; and keeping a critical eye on all things musical throughout the entire performance, where he sat playing at side stage, was their hard-working MD! It was a great 21st Birthday Party celebration and I was totally blown away by it all!

DISTRICT No 3: Central Scotland

Alloa Musical Players: Urinetown

Director: Kaye Finlay; Musical Director: Steven Segued

This proved to be a well performed and thought-provoking musical. Good, pacey music and songs that at times seemed incongruous beside the reality of a society manipulated by a capitalist who saw the opportunity of a calamitous water drought to tax the community for using the only source of water, the public toilets. The arch villain Cladwell – a wonderful and ironic name – was chillingly and effortlessly played by George Marcinkieicz. In her own way Kirsty Gillies portrayed Pennywise, the collector of the toilet dues, just as mercilessly in her blind loyalty to the man whose mantra of greed was all. Similarly blind in obedience, the difficult dual role of narrator and enforcement Officer Locksmith was in the capable hands of Alan Musgrave and he in turn was well matched in routines with a lively Lesley Kettle as Officer Barrel. In the character Bobby Strong, Michael Coyne showed the strength of character needed to rebel against this process and to endure the pain in deciding to kidnap Cladwell’s daughter with whom he fell in love. She, aptly named Hope, was the ray of hope. In this role Caitlin Smith gave us a naive, well educated and well meant heroine who became the focal point of revenge from the frustrated community and some dark scenes ensued. Other memorable roles came from Leanne

Cook as a dominant and colourful Ms McQueen, Richard Cook as the wily Fipp and the poor folk – Rob McDermott as Strong's father and violent Harry, and Little Sally and Little Becky Two Shoes, namely Kat McGuigan and Louise Stephenson. But everyone was strong. Singing was true and diction was clear – important when following this story matters so much. The chorus worked well together and the dance interpreted the sense of the script, culminating for me in the cleverly orchestrated 'Snuff that Girl'. Built by their team the set reflected the bleakness of the situation and outlined visually that the elite were above and the poor were down. The place and costumes could be anywhere and anytime. Dark humour came across as did the raw emotion of rebellion. This was not an easy show to portray but the company did it and themselves justice. Well done.

Callander Amateur Operatic Society: Annie

Director: Iain Fraser; Musical Director: Linda Cantlay

Once again the Society gave the young members of Callander Kirk Junior Choir the opportunity to show their talents in one of the amateur circuit's favourite musicals and they lived up to their expectations singing beautifully and moving in character and in unison. In the title role was a confident Lucy Underwood. Her hauntingly sung "Maybe" set the bar for the show. She gave us some wonderful moments as she combated Miss Hannigan, manipulated her benefactor Warbucks and gained his love and was especially insightful in realising when she is confronted with the phoney Mudgett that her feelings are for the present and Daddy Warbucks and not the fantasy of her parents. The orphans gave her great support with Amelia Morley as Molly delighting with her direct and feisty approach. Angela Dickinson in the role of Miss Hannigan shows she is as trapped as the orphans and who could fail to be moved by her rendition of "Little Girls"? On the edge of drunkenness but alert to the main chance, she balances pathos with comedy and her facial expressions were awesome. Her brother Rooster was played wholeheartedly graspingly by Brian McKay egged on by Lily, his deliciously scheming partner played by Gemma Ferguson. This trio gave "Easy Street" their all. There were so many good individual performances here: Naomi Scott graceful in song and action as she was in name Grace; Grant Webb as the impersonal powerful businessman Warbucks who recovered his human side through his love for Annie seen in a heartfelt "Something Was Missing"; Steve Murphy as the long suffering Drake but with humour; John Gallacher bringing gravitas to the role of Roosevelt; the wonderful voice of Steven Kent as Bert Healey; and the characterisations of the orphans, the Boylan Sisters, Sophie The Kettle et al. Memorable moments also came with the chorus singing "Hooverville" and the harmonies in the servants' numbers. The sets complemented the action, likewise the costumes, and the orchestra supported the singers. The lighting was handled sensitively and unobtrusively. All the hard work by officials and cast resulted in a thoroughly enjoyable performance that was a pleasure to watch.

Falkirk Operatic Society: Anything Goes

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

Anything Goes is one of those feel good shows with a predictable but highly amusing story on board the SS American on its voyage from New York which brings together entertaining characters and so many familiar rhythmic musical numbers by Cole Porter. As the nightclub singer Reno Sweeney, Nikki Johnstone brought liveliness and excitement to the role whilst delighting the audience with her vocal ability. Equally, Graeme Scott provided a great performance through his drama and singing as the young Wall Street broker Billy Crocker. Hannah Gillies gave a fine performance as the American debutante Hope Harcourt, the object of Billy's affection, as did Carole Sutherland, her overbearing mother Evangeline. James Cassidy brought great amusement as the stiff upper lipped stuffy and hapless Sir Evelyn Oakleigh and Darren Tasker characterised the loveable but dim gangster Moonface Martin who was well paired with Shirley McNulty as Bonnie, his lovable girlfriend. Malcolm McNulty was well suited in the role as Elijah J. Whitney as was Willie Cunningham, Captain of the ship. Victoria Daley, Rebecca Gillies, Amy Sutherland and Jennifer Hughes all added to the entertainment as Reno's Angels and the remaining principals enacted their parts well with great support enthusiastically provided from the chorus. Musical numbers were well sung and staged adding to what was a 'Delovely' show and a most enjoyable evening.

David Black

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society: Evita

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

Lloyd Webber's music ensures this is an enjoyable show but Michelle Weston as Evita took charge of the songs and held us all enthralled. She took us on the journey from the poverty in Argentina and led us to the heights of political power showing steely backbone of her own as she negotiated and triumphed over that challenging sing. In costumes - many and apt - with quick changes some deftly done on stage, she looked and was Evita. She was ably supported by Ian Davidson as Chè, in a tricky and almost narrative role, with some difficult singing in his own right carefully achieved and by Graeme Rodger in the equally challenging role as Perón showing, despite his power as President, his helplessness against Evita's star. John Coe as Magaldi showed his mettle and took his notes cleanly while Jennifer Kay Brisbane as Perón's discarded mistress showed her talent in a beautifully rendered "Another Suitcase In Another Hall".

Despite the difficult recitative score, real passion for their roles came across. The good sized chorus delivered the solemnity of the opening "Requiem" and the lively crowd scene numbers which were wholly in keeping with the spirit of the times and showed restraint in the signature "Don't Cry For Me Argentina" which made it all the more memorable. Production officials ensured a good sounding orchestra complemented the singers, movement was controlled and staging was unobtrusively successful. The set with the iconic balcony fitted the bill and imaginative use was made of the screen without it overtaking action on the stage. This was a seriously good show and everyone is to be congratulated.

Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions: Barnum

Director: Calum Campbell; Musical Director: Eddie MacLennan; Choreographer: Hayley Fleming;
Assistant Choreographer: Amy Hart

Based on the life of "the greatest showman" PT Barnum, the show follows his trials and tribulations as he defends the noble art of humbug. The title role is one of the most demanding in amateur theatre requiring strong singing and acting as well as the need to master a range of circus skills. Hardly off the stage, Josh Ure, had all of these qualities in ample measure and performed the role with ease with good stage presence. He was an ample foil to his wife Chairy played by Annie Knox. She had a lovely singing voice and captured the angst faced by the character as she faced up to each of her husband's ever more fanciful business projects. I particularly enjoyed their duet "The Colours Of My Life". As the competing love interest, Alana Robertson had a fine singing voice in the role of Jenny Lind. Oscar Davies as the Ringmaster gave a commanding performance and helped to keep the show moving along. All of the other principal had clearly worked hard to develop their characters and all were well cast in their roles. The chorus sang and moved well and excelled in the many circus skills they had worked to perfect. "Come Follow the Band" was a particular highlight. Bright colourful costumes, clever choreography and a great sounding orchestra all contributed to another great show by the group. Congratulations to all on and off stage for bringing one of my favourite shows to life with such a joyful production. I was also delighted to be able to present a number of Long Service Awards to members at the end of the night.

Stuart McCue-Dick

The Livingston Players: Made in Dagenham

Director: Sandy Queenan; Musical Director: Crawford Moyes; Choreographer: Lynne Hurst

The true storyline of the Ford women's fight for equal pay in 1968 is an emotive one. Add in rousing songs and the show is a winner. The strong pivotal character of Rita O'Grady was ably performed by Suzanne Smail. The feisty championing of her son was the precursor to her taking on the role of leader and sticking with it even as she saw the effects on her husband. Her voice was well suited to the role and the duets with her husband. In his role of Eddie, Ryan O'Neill gave us a normal bloke bewildered by his wife's stance, especially in his well sung and moving delivery of "The Letter", yet proud of her in the end. Their children, Erin Boyd as Sharon and Joseph Gail as Graham, worked well together and coped with the difficult singing in "Busy Woman". The show delved into the sharpness of business and raucousness of factory life: the factory ladies suitably varied and coarse and the men prejudiced and sexist. Louise Fairnie got her teeth in to the beefy part of Beryl, as did mates, Chiara Loia as the deviant Sandra, Holly Marshall in the ditsy role of Claire and Joanna Robertson as Cass. Amid some young new faces, Josh Ure made his mark as Sid and Jay Brown impressed with his take on Buddy Cortina. Well paired were Keith Hewitt and Alison Carcas as Monty and Connie; and Sandra Karolak and Craig Potter as Mr and Mrs Hopkins, all four highlighting the different classes. Alex Kemp was well suited to the comical role of Harold Wilson and the accent and sharpness of Barbara Castle was caught by Lynne Hurst. Peter Tomassi brought out the scheming arrogance of the American tycoon Mr Tooley. Comedic moments on the factory floor and at Westminster stood well against the serious ones like Connie's death. The vividness of great numbers like "This Is What We Want", "Everybody Out" and "Stand Up" gave the chorus great opportunities and took the audience with them. Congratulations to all.

Project Theatre: Dancing on Broadway

Choreographer: Louise Brown

The seventeen young dancers of Inov8 performed a lively and varied programme with movement tailored to different ages and experience. The whole evening was characterised by sensitively interpreting the sense of the songs in movement and adjusting to the different tempos. The opening medley from *Les Misérables* captured the raucous and harsh nature of its big numbers and the poignancy of the likes of "Castle on a Cloud". This set the tone for the evening and other big medleys like the "Hard Knock Life" from *Annie*, "All That Jazz" from *Chicago* and "Food Glorious Food" from *Oliver!* demonstrated clean foot work, team work and good use of space. The two girls who danced to "Popular" complemented each other, the solo dancer in "Friend Like Me" had real feeling for her character, as did the timely movements of the dancer interpreting "For Forever". Fun and enthusiasm for the moves and music came across in numbers from *Legally Blonde*, the "Step Sisters' Lament" and the enjoyable scenario in "Carrying the Banner". The choice of Broadway gave scope for different costuming which the youngsters enjoyed. They coped with some very quick

changes and moved with ease from one section to the next. Costumes were carefully chosen to suit the dance, as were props. Because the music was well known, it made it easier for the audience to appreciate the dances. The finale from *The Lion King* brought all their combined expertise together to round off a really entertaining evening.

Sabos Musical Theatre: Calamity Jane

Director & Musical Director: Andrew Nicol; Choreographer: Gwyneth Grant

The company served up a delight of a show. The discipline and energy of the opening number set the standard and the rest lived up to it. The story of Calamity and her antics refreshed anew and Roslyn Dale took the character by storm. Her singing was crisp and clear and entirely in keeping with the madcap she was. She caught to a nicety this larger than life girl who behaved and dressed like a man. The ability to deliver her lines with seemingly unconscious humour made the comedy seem easy. She was well matched by Simon Thomas as Wild Bill Hickock the almost cynical onlooker, who was sweet on her from the start. He too showed his mettle in singing, especially in "Higher Than A Hawk", and was wonderfully inadequate to deal with Calamity's undressing strop in Act II. Chris Taylor as Katie Brown gives us a transformation from hesitant newbie to attractive singer and conveys ambition tempered with selflessness when she leaves town. Andrew Adam as Danny Gilmartin, the laconic captain, is moved by the 'cigarette' card then by the real thing. His rivalry with Bill for Katie's affection provided more humour but there was tenderness too in the lovely duet with Katie "Love You Dearly". Ian Atherton gave us a deliciously edgy theatre proprietor Henry Miller and Elouise Carter contrasted as his level headed daughter Susan who became a supporter of the song and dance man Francis Fryer where Graham Chapman, dressed as the actress, was a hoot. Jo Mckie saw Adelaide Adams as fairly ruthless, one eye on her fans and the other on the future. All were supported by good minor principals and a chorus that really gelled and who made sure the big numbers "Deadwood Stage", "Windy City" and "The Black Hills Of Dakota" worked their magic. Choreography was impressively slick and apt. The inclusion of the stagecoach at beginning and end worked well. The set of Deadwood and its perspective gave the illusion of space. The transformation of the log cabin in "A Woman's Touch" was cleverly done and scene changes went smoothly. This was a production at ease with itself, well staged and offering a night of pure enjoyment.

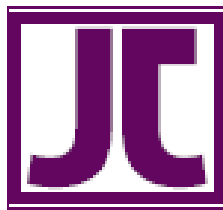


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IN FOND REMEMBRANCE

Grace E Smith: Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth



The whole Harlequin family was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our Honorary President and founding member, Grace Smith, on Saturday 11 May 2019. The number of tributes which have been posted on social media over the last few weeks following Grace's death is testament to the enormous impact that she had on the lives of so many people over so many years. Without Grace the club that we all know and love would simply not have existed and thousands of young people would not have had the chance to experience the thrill and excitement of being on stage and performing.

On an evening in February 1977 Harlequin was born following a successful pantomime in 1976 staged by the Junior Youth Fellowship of Giffnock Congregational Church. The group decided that following the success of that pantomime, what the area needed was a theatre group which would solely cater for the needs of young people. The foresight of those founding members 42 years ago has grown into the club we know and love today. Harlequin's first production was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* which was staged in May 1977 in Clarkston Hall during Civic Week. The group began with no funds, only enthusiasm, and spearheading those early productions was Grace Smith. In total Grace was director of 52 productions for Harlequin including a number of premieres. However, the highlight in those years was the British Amateur Premiere of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in March 1984 – a real achievement for a youth theatre group only 7 years old!

Grace bowed out of directorial and committee duties in 1999, handing over to the next generation, and was always delighted to see former performing members taking on the roles of Director, Producer, Choreographer and Musical Director as well as serving on the committee and taking responsibility to ensure that Harlequin would go from strength to strength as we move towards our Golden Jubilee. Grace was invited to become Honorary President of the club in 2002, a position she took on with great pride, and nobody was more pleased when, in our 40th Anniversary year, the club was recognised by NODA Scotland with their Youth Award. As one former member put it, "No matter how well you thought you'd done (and I mean as a fully grown man working as MD on productions etc), it didn't really count until Grace approved (and then offered a suggestion as to what might actually have made it a little better still). Few leave behind a tangible legacy that people can say, with certainty, really benefitted their community and gave generations of children opportunities which they would never otherwise have had."

Grace was immensely proud watching Harlequin continue to evolve over the years and develop to give young people and the not so young adult helpers the experience of a lifetime and youngsters confidence to perform on stage, to sing to dance, to act and to learn the ropes of theatre be that on or off stage. We think of Grace and we think of Harlequin. That's a true legacy.

Kilmarnock Amateur Operatic Society

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Ayr Amateur Opera Company: Half A Sixpence

Director: Martin Christie; Musical Director: Grant Walsh; Choreographer: Lynne Christie

Always excited to see a show new to me, this was the first time I had seen *Half A Sixpence*, although realised very quickly that I knew more of the songs than I thought. This show is almost a one man show, following the story of Arthur Kipps as he dumps his long-standing girlfriend in favour of social climbing, dumps his new fiancée in favour of returning to his roots, walks out on his job when he comes into money and forgets about his steadfast friends. Now with all these contrasting, sometimes dubious, situations and emotions, along with being the central character, Kipps needs to maintain and establish a great rapport with the audience which is what David Cannell achieved with great success. He balanced a naivety in the role with a likeable brightness. David dominated the show throughout in a captivating performance showcasing his acting, singing and dancing skills. His shop buddies were Sid, Buggins and Pierce, respectively played by Michael McCabe, Bryan Slavin and Andrew Martin who gave strong performances and produced effortlessly contrasting characters throughout. Kipps' original and final love interest, Ann Pornick, was given a wonderful and strong portrayal by Lynne Kenmuir. Lynne balanced the warm and likable character in Act I with the heartier and uptight girl we meet in Act II when she encounters Kipps at some higher social gatherings where she is a servant. These scenes, which establish the distance threatening to separate them due to differing social status, were excellently performed by David and Lynne. The high society in Kipps' life comes in the form of the Walsinghams, with whom Kipps becomes entangled until he realises the error of his ways and also learns that Young Walsingham has embezzled his money. Helen Walsingham who is very much the milder member of this family, encouraged by the selfish needs of her mother and brother, was superbly played by Ciara Brady. Ciara's character was kind, gentle, elegant, and with an innocence that meant in the end when Kipps leaves her, I was nearly in tears feeling so sorry for her. Ciara's impressive singing voice was beautiful and a joy to listen to throughout the show. Although professing her love for Kipps, their coupling is doomed to failure as a result of the misgivings of her aloof mother, and opportunity grasping brother. These were three contrasting performances and Carol Ann McKinlay and Neil Heath played the "baddies" of the piece fantastically well with relish. The other character that tends to dominate in Kipps' life is his actor manager Chitterlow who is the channel for Kipps' second fortune. Stuart McKinlay was perfectly cast and gave a larger than life and very theatrical portrayal. He and David complemented each other perfectly and were very entertaining to watch. The shop girls, Victoria, Flo and Kate, were nicely portrayed by Sara Green, Wendy Cannell, and Diane Woodburn. The girls, like the boys, gave individual characterisations very well and brought energy and merriment to the story. The rest of the cast was made up of an enthusiastic ensemble and supporting character performances including Joshua Good as Young Kipps and Lemoni Dempster as Young Ann. Huge congratulations to the crew and production team working behind the scenes. The set was impressive and served all scenes well and along with carefully used pieces of furniture and props served the plot perfectly and ensured a swift progression from scene to scene so that pace was never compromised. Within the stationary surrounding set the choreography looked spotless, tidy and well drilled which was backed up with tremendous and rousing ensemble and principal singing from start to finish. The costumes were effective, as was the lighting so the visual side added to the overall marvellous achievement this show was for the club. I would also like to personally thank the committee for being the first club in District 4 to list a diary of upcoming shows in their programme, something which was agreed at the District 4 meeting in January. It was lovely to see the supportive community in District 4 grow and was very much appreciated.

Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group: Legally Blonde

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

OMIGOD what a show we saw! It was a real pleasure to be invited to review *Legally Blonde* for Craig Inglis. Following the extremely warm welcome and hospitality from the front of house team, we were immediately transported to the world of Elle Woods and the truly pinkness of it all! As soon as the show started, the audience was immersed in the world of fun, laughter, and pink, getting sucked into the story of Elle Woods and her ambition to achieve her goal and marry Warner. How things change! Elle played by Kathryn Johnston showed her amazing talent of singing and acting, very rarely off the stage and always in control when she was on the stage. Warren, played by Daniel McDonald, portrayed his off-hand approach well, displaying his range of singing and acting. Any show is a challenge to get to the stage, and not all companies have the ease of working in a theatre with a wide range of facilities. However, Johnstone Phoenix did not let this hold them back in any way. This was a great theatrical experience from start to finish. A lot of thought had gone in to the overall creative design of the show to ensure that scenes ran into each other smoothly. Craig's vision for the show and the use of a video wall and static set worked a treat. The company worked well together to ensure each scene flowed from one to another and it was obvious that Stage Manager Wilson Miller and all the backstage crew worked in harmony with what was happening on the stage. Working in restricted space can be challenging, but this did not put the company of Johnstone Phoenix off in any way as they executed the transition of scenes, intertwined in the production. Excellent sound and lighting added to the overall success of the show. It was great to see an entire company of all ages being appropriately cast in the wide range of principal roles and ensemble, all working equally hard to ensure this show portrayed the story through song, dance and drama. The Delta Nu's worked well together showing real solidarity within their team, as well as within the company ensemble. It was obvious that a lot of hard work as well as

fun went into the rehearsals and their overall team spirit was brought to life in the production. Paulette, played by Jen Healey, gave an excellent performance bringing the right level of comedy to the role. Creating an orchestra pit in front of the seating made the communication between the band and the performing area work well, and while both were on floor level, this did not take away from the theatrical experience that was created within the hall. Well done Andrew Scott, Musical Director, in the results achieved in bringing great singing to the stage. The choreography showed the many talents in the company, and in particular the dancers. Fiona McGregor, Choreographer, ensured that the dancers and cast were well drilled in all aspects of their routines, workouts and “bend and snaps”! Overall, this was an extremely entertaining show where it was obvious from start to finish that rehearsals had been full of fun, energy and detailed work. A big well done to the team both on and off stage, and front of house to ensure audiences were treated to great night out, and I really do believe the entire team achieved their aim to have the audiences leaving the theatre with a smile on their face.

Liz Daniels

Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group: Seussical JR

Directors: Craig Inglis, Carol McLaughlan; Musical Director: Cat Clark; Choreographer: Aly Lamond

Based on the Dr Seuss books and the many and varied characters, this junior version provided a chance for everyone of this talented cast to shine. As the narrator of the story, Mya Gillespie was engaging as The Cat in the Hat as she brought the story of Horton the Elephant to life. Her dialogue was crystal clear and she had great stage presence. As Horton the Elephant Georgia McKay brought the character vividly to life with a lovely singing voice and great characterisation. Amelia McDonald was a lively Jojo whilst Katie Wood was a caring Gertrude McFuzz. The other principals were well cast with each showing off their own individual characters – I loved the very sassy Kangaroos. There is plenty of opportunity for the ensemble in this show and they made the most of every opportunity. Well done to the Bad Girls, The Wickershams, Jungle Creatures and Whos – all stars of the future. The singing by principals and chorus was of the highest standard with some lovely harmonies and was enhanced by the professional backing tracks that are available for the show. Choreography was simple, effective and very well executed. The wonderful costumes and the colourful setting all added to the overall enjoyment. Congratulations to everyone on and off stage for a wonderful show. Youth theatre is in great shape in Johnstone and I look forward to watching this cast grow and develop over the coming years.

Stuart McCue-Dick

Kilmarnock Amateur Operatic Society: My Fair Lady

Director: Liz Daniels; Musical Director: Tom Daniels; Choreographer: Marie-Anne McGrattan

My Fair Lady is probably the most famous rags to riches story ever told and after a few years off the amateur scene, it was an absolute delight to see this timeless classic again in the lovely Kilmarnock Palace Theatre. Now, for *My Fair Lady* to be a success it heavily relies on the characters of Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins. The production team were in an excellent position where they could cast two Elizas, Pauline Ferguson and Cassidy Murray. There was no rest for the leading lady on a night off either, as when not on as Eliza they took part in the maids' ensemble. Hats off to both Pauline and Cassidy for the dedication on remembering all that differing dialogue, moves and singing when some of us, speaking completely for myself, can only cope with learning one part! Cassidy was performing the role on the night I was in and her take on Eliza was a triumph. From cockney flower girl to a proper lady, Cassidy was every inch the character balancing a gentle warmth and feisty nature to capture the character's journey. She also used her beautiful voice well making all Eliza's songs a joy to listen to, especially “I Could Have Danced All Night”. I am sure Pauline excelled at her performances as well, and it was lovely to see a lot of supportive looks between the girls when they met on stage during the show, showing that they were in this together. Neil Warrander's portrayal of Higgins captured a very eccentric and comical side to the character making Higgins very likeable. His contrasting renditions of an animated “I'm An Ordinary Man”, and the softer “I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face” should be commended. The two leading characters were very well supported by David Fyfe as Colonel Pickering, Fiona Currie as Mrs Pearce, Colette Dunsmore as Mrs Eynsford-Hill, and Fiona Douglas who shone as Mrs Higgins. Graeme Strawnhorn impressed with good vocals and a gentle nature as Freddy Eynsford-Hill. Now, where would *My Fair Lady* be without Alfred P Doolittle? Douglas Wardrop was perfect in this role. His “I'm Getting Married In The Morning” had the audience laughing, clapping and singing along. The rest of the supporting principal line up excelled, capturing each scene and setting perfectly. The rest of the cast was made up of a superbly sounding ensemble. Congratulations must be given to the whole production team: Director Liz Daniels for her handling of this well-loved classic and clever use of set when transforming us from Higgins's house, Ascot and Covent Garden, where the movement of the columns was very effective; Musical Director Tom Daniels, whose orchestra and cast made such a fantastic sound throughout each number, showcasing impressive harmonies; and Choreographer Marie-Anne McGrattan for utilising the stage space exceptionally well in each scene and showcasing the ensemble's best abilities in her creative and very period fitting movement and dances. A huge well done to the entire cast, crew and committee working hard behind the scenes on a fantastic success.

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Largs Amateur Operatic Society: Sister Act

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

Director & Choreographer Irene Cameron and Musical Director David Edwards, along with the fabulous cast of Largs Amateur Operatic Society, really worked their magic with this production of *Sister Act*. The music throughout the show was excellently performed by principals, the ensemble and orchestra. The choreography featured great routines for the bigger production numbers and effective movement for the principal led numbers. Who knew the boys in Largs could strut their 70s 'funky stuff' so well! The static set was well used, and the opening doors to represent the different / changing spaces was very effective and meant smooth scene changes. The cast moving the set and scenery also aided to this and was well executed. The characterisation across the board, supported with great comic timing by the full cast, was super and they had worked hard to grow and maintain their characters throughout the show. Deloris was confidently played by Morag Robertson who brought sass, energy and a powerful voice to easily master the songs and scenes. Rarely off the stage, she gave a consistently strong performance and her voice in songs like "Fabulous Baby" and "Sister Act" was striking. She also grew a natural rapport with the audience, vital for the role. Star Penders was infectious in her zest and energy for her role as Sister Mary Patrick. She had the audience in stitches with her comic timing and used her physicality and stage presence to nail this role. Star contrasted her character beautifully with Karen Wilkin as Sister Mary Robert who gave a great performance as the shy young postulant developing inner strength through meeting Deloris. Her solo "The Life I Never Led" was particularly excellent. The part of Mother Superior was skilfully played by Linda McMurray who brought a warmth along with a lot of humour to the role of the as the over-bearing head of the convent. Donna Laing (Sister Mary Lazarus), Lynsey Ewing (Sister Mary Martin), Nan Fulton (Sister Mary Teresa) and Gordon Fyfe (Monsignor O'Hara) completed the talent line up in the convent. Gordon in particular really boosted the part of the monsignor making him a worth adversary for Linda's Mother Superior. Attempting to protect Deloris by placing her in the convent for witness protection is the hero of the show Eddie (Calum McVittie). Calum's portrayal of the 'sweaty' and geeky police officer was great to watch and his number "I Could Be That Guy" had the audience cheering and laughing throughout. Andy Park was living his best life as the 70s gangster Curtis, strutting across the stage and creating a menacing character balancing the audience laughing at him and disliking him very well. Allan Penders, William Clark-Ferguson, David McGarvey (Joey, Pablo and TJ respectively) were entertaining and very funny in their numbers as the haphazard gangsters. Michelle and Tina were played by Jacqui Park and Ashley Smith, who together with Allan Milligan as Ernie ensured that the opening scenes let the audience know they were in for a treat. Boasting a large ensemble, the musical numbers which this show has in abundance, were all individually dedicated to their performances, and the energy and joy coming off the stage was evident from the first bar of music. I would also like to thank President Fiona Page for another warm welcome and extend a massive well done to the entire club on this excellent production which shows the club growing from strength to strength.

Paisley Musical & Operatic Society: Chicago

Director: Blair Ledgerwood-Cruikshank; Musical Director: Sean Stirling; Choreographer: Greg Robertson

Well, where do I start? It would be simpler to list all the names of the cast and crew followed by a massive congratulations and thank you for sharing their immense talent, vision and wonderful show. However, that wouldn't make for a good show report, so please bear with me as I try to highlight the key features within this outstanding show. *Chicago* has only just popped onto the amateur scene with few productions taking place, and I was very privileged to have watched and enjoyed PMOS's production at the very atmospheric Websters Theatre in Glasgow. A smaller venue than the club is normally used to, but this only seemed to add to the magic of the production and was proved to be no issue for the talented production team, cast, crew and backstage helpers. For *Chicago* to be a success you need two key players whose journey we follow, in the form of Roxie and Velma played by two powerhouse actresses, Lisa Dutch and Jennifer Hardie. Both excelled in their respective roles. Jennifer brought to Velma a strong character with impressive vocals, effortless dancing and flawless acting along with an air of professionalism that made the character an accomplished triumph. Lisa gave us a witty and quirky Roxie utilising her impeccable comic timing, faultless character acting, beautiful voice and polished dancing. Both worked well together, and with their fellow cast, and had the audience in the palm of their hands, much like the jury in the trial. Keeping Roxie and Velma in line, along with the rest of the inmates at the Cook County Jail, was Susie Thompson McMahon as Matron 'Mama' Morton – another sublime performance showcasing Susie's strong and controlled vocals as she dominated the stage in each of her scenes. The suave and charismatic Billy Flynn was captured exceptionally well by Gary Bennet who with a calm nature managed to manipulate the strong women around him and again had the audience hanging on his every word. In particular his number "We Both Reached For The Gun" was superb, and Lisa's facial expressions just perfect. In contrast to the confident Billy is the shy, naive, innocent and slightly dim Amos, played by Craig Ledgerwood-Cruikshank. Craig's characterisation was consistent throughout and he cleverly and comically merged into the background when required, but made his presence known with his fantastic vocals in his version of "Mr Cellophane". Adding the light relief and perfect comedy touches during the show was the genius casting of Jim McPhee as Mary Sunshine. Another triumph of a performance keeping the audience in stitches. Other significant characters in the principal line up were Greg Robertson as a very striking Fred Casely, Robin Cameron as Sergeant Fogarty and the impeccable Christina Leon as Kitty. One of the outstanding

numbers in the show was the “Cell Block Tango”. The lighting was excellent and added very much to the choreography and feel of the number and was led by Jennifer Hardie as Velma, Eilish Brand (Mona), Claire Robertson (Liz), Catherine Ross (Hunyak), Caroline Telfer (June) and Heather McNellis (Annie). The individual characterisation was evident from each girl and in particular Claire Robertson’s accent and facial expressions as Liz were great. The number was completed, as all the others were by an exceptionally strong ensemble. The dancing used to depict each murderer’s story was smart and executed with style. This was a constant theme for all numbers with the ensemble of 17 proving themselves triple threats over an array of characters, with sass, style and sex appeal oozing from the stage. In particular Aly Lamond and Eilish Brand’s dancing was on point in the Fosse style and a huge ‘hats off’ to the boys for mastering the technical aspects of the impressive lifts used throughout the show especially in “Roxie”, where Lisa was nearly never on the ground. This meticulous ensemble completed a “razzle dazzling” cast of performers who it was evident gave their all to their performances. Backing up the cast was an ingenious set, creative lighting and a beautiful sounding orchestra. Huge congrats to Blair, Sean, Greg and the rest of the production team and stage crew on their commitment to the show’s success. I would also like to commend the stunning costumes and wardrobe team of Jacqui, Margaret, Fiona and Vickie for pulling it all together to create one consistent look. Overall, a fantastic production from PMOS proving that the club is going from strength to strength and the world of amateur theatre in District 4 and Scotland is as exciting and diverse as ever.



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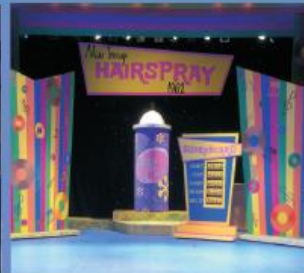
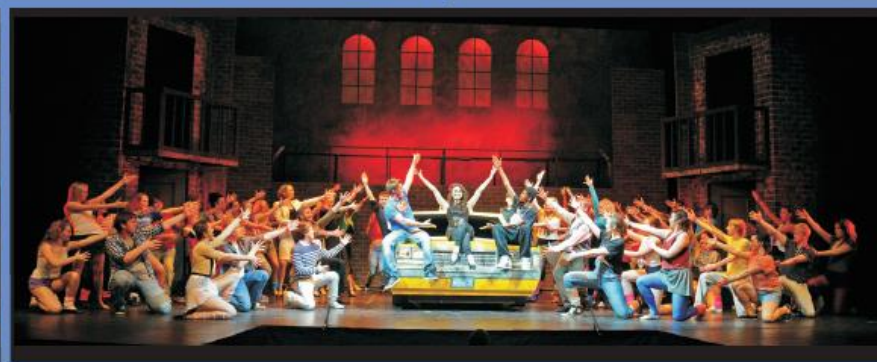
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Airdrie Arts Guild Drama Group: An Old Man's New & Last Tango In Airdrie

Director: Ronnie Mackie

For their spring offering the club presented two excellent and very different one act plays. *An Old Man's New* is set in the early sixties and tells the story of Joe Docherty, who having been laid off is forced to move out of his native Glasgow. It follows Joe as he copes with his new environment, loss of friends and all that life has to throw at him including the loss of his wife. In the lead role Bill McCloy captured Joe's blunt and earthy humour very well. He was a great foil to his life-long friend and the narrator of the piece Father Billy Boyne played with great effect by Colin Archibald. Much of the humour of the piece came from the fact that the friends belonged to opposite sides of the religious divide. Linda Gouther as Joe's wife used her brassy good nature to try and help him cope with his lot, whilst his daughter Lynne (Karry McKellar) provided him with comfort and support following the passing of Jessie. This was a well-directed and acted play – at times thought provoking and at times extremely witty. Well done to the actors for giving us all four excellent portrayals. The second play was a complete contrast. *The Last Tango in Airdrie* finds the last four remaining members of a local am dram group at their AGM wondering what show to do next to help save the group. Having fallen on hard times Gordon, the group's director, decides the only thing that seems to be selling tickets is "sex". In the title role Eddie Gouther was perfect, never missing the chance of a laugh often at the expense of audience members, local politicians or fellow club members. He worked hard to keep the group under control with often hilarious outcomes. As the musical obsessed club secretary Joyce, Helen McAleer, was brilliant. Morag Donald was an excellent Margaret as the opinionated, wannabe diva who thought she was a class above the rest. The final member of the group was Bernard, the stage manager, who was well played by Liam McKinstry. Did they succeed in getting "bums on seats" – I won't spoil the ending. All I will say is I have not laughed out loud so much in a very long time. Both plays were well set with appropriate furniture and props and costumes were in keeping with both time period and the individual characters. Thank you to the club for the invitation and a very enjoyable night's entertainment. I look forward to panto later in the year.

Stuart McCue-Dick

Airdrie & Coatbridge Amateur Operatic Society: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Director: Eleanor McKay; Musical Director: Ross Angus; Choreographer: Lisa Kennedy

This Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice collaboration is one of the most popular family musicals which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year telling the story of Jacob's favourite son Joseph and his eleven brothers entirely through song. From the opening sequence of this production we knew we were in for a treat and we were certainly not disappointed. In the title role, Steven Struthers was just amazing in his portrayal as the dreamer Joseph holding the audience in the palm of his hand throughout the show. Usually only with one narrator, this production had three, with Caley Cheney, Katie Angus and Laura Shepherd each bringing their own outstanding individuality to the narration. All portraying the brothers brought great energy and excitement to their roles, joined by Mark Andrews ably cast as Jacob, their father. Playing the part of Pharaoh, Ian Campbell put his own stamp on the "Song Of The King"! Other featured roles included Andrew Rae and Lisa Cassidy who were brilliantly cast as Mr and Mrs Potiphar and similarly were Amy McDonald and Susan Campbell as the Butler and the Baker. This was a dynamically colourful, slick and polished production. The singing, choreography and drama provided by the entire company was of the highest standard and the creatively designed staging added to the spectacle. A huge well done to all the principals, featured ensembles, dancers, production team including the unseen band. The standing ovation was well deserved and was indeed testimony to the quality of the production. Truly amazing!

Cumbernauld Musical Theatre Society: Sister Act

Director: Fraser Morrison; Musical Director: Ian Monteith-Mathie; Choreographer: Amanda Letarte

The Society embraced this lively fast paced show with much of the comedy set around Deloris Van Cartier, disguised as Sister Mary Clarence, in her attempts to inspire and develop the choral ability of a group of feisty nuns at the Convent of the Queen of Angels Cathedral while her ex-boyfriend Curtis and his mob attempted to settle a score with her. Catherine Mackenzie was absolutely fabulous in delivering an outstanding performance as the disco diva Deloris displaying great versatility through her acting ability as well as her impressive vocal range. The self-righteous Mother Superior was in safe hands with Julie Cassells and her sister nuns were very well characterised by Christine Duncan as the naive Sister Mary Robert, Amanda Letarte as the more eccentric Sister Mary Patrick and Marie Jo McCrossan who breathed a new lease of life into Sister Mary Lazarus with cleverly pointed 'one-liners'. Kieran Butler made a great shy and quiet "Sweaty" Eddie who eventually mustered up the courage to make his move on Deloris. David Campbell was suitably cast as gangster Curtis Shank and Andrew Davidson carried out the role of Monsignor O'Hara with great dignity. Alan Brown, Christopher Costello and Gerard Kane each interpreted their part as the thugs brilliantly in particular through the number "The Lady In The Long Black Dress". The remaining principals with the entire cast performed to the highest standard. Musical numbers were well choreographed and staged around a minimalistic set with highly effective lighting and other creative effects. This fun filled production provided first rate entertainment with plenty action, lots of laughs and great music and drama which all involved in should be extremely pleased with.

Dalziel High School FP Easter Egg Club: Take A Bow

Directors: Laura Neilson, Jennifer Craig; Musical Director: Allan Black; Assistant Musical Director: Jennifer Greenhill;
Choreographer: Heather Black

It was with sadness that I attended the last show of the great Easter Egg Club who have entertained audiences throughout Lanarkshire with their much loved revues comprising popular musical numbers and well-written witty sketches over the past 70 plus years. My first introduction to the Club was in the early 1980s when as a young member of a Youth Fellowship we attended their annual shows, a practice which continued for many years, never anticipating that I would be part of the Easter Egg story as a future accompanist in the pit. *Take A Bow* got off to a great start with the Elton John number "I'm Still Standing" followed by "Hold Back The River", and then an ensemble of women presenting beautifully blended harmonies singing "Why Do Fools Fall In Love?" There were some great choral moments throughout the show and this year particular highlights included the Carpenters and Mamas and Pappas medleys, "Stand By Me", "This Is Me", "Handbags and Gladrags", "Somebody To Love" and "Don't Stop Believing". Peppered throughout the show were solos performed by Jill Neilson, Laura Neilson, Fiona Shaw, Jennifer Finnie, Eileen Casey, Lindsay Thomson, Lorraine Harris, Billy Neilson and Heather Black. However, I must make special mention of Jennifer Greenhill's powerful presentation of "Natural Woman" and "The Scientist" ably performed by Erin and Gerard Casey. Choreography was simple but highly effective which complemented the overall production and the quality of the singing. The company's own scenery builders created the usual high standard sets, in particular the second act which had a theme of 'music', incorporating musical symbols around the focus of a guitar and keyboards. Moyra Scott excelled as compere for the evening, providing highly amusing story telling and in bringing the show to its finale, she respectfully acknowledged all who had been part of the club over the years including those involved in production and the Club's faithful followers, bringing the audience to its feet. *Take A Bow* may be the last for this cast but who knows what may lie ahead for the Club and with thoughts of their final musical number, "Don't Stop Believing". If they wanted to go out with a bang, they certainly did. Great show and well done! The Easter Egg Club will be missed!

Hamilton Operatic & Dramatic Club: This is Music

Director: Roland Russell; Musical Director: Elizabeth Pearson;
Choreographers: Wendy Macfarlane, Bevevrey Gardner, Ann Dalkin

This certainly was music with a varied programme taking in lots of familiar songs. The concert party sang with feeling and an enthusiasm that was infectious. Opening with "This Is Me" followed by an "Oklahoma!" medley gave us a taste of old and new that was the backbone of their programme. The arrangement of harmonies in "Oklahoma!" itself was refreshing and the ensuing chorus numbers from *Mamma Mia* and *Sister Act* hit all the right spots. Soloists followed on naturally with the likes of a heartfelt "You Must Love Me", an empathetic "Another Suitcase In Another Hall", "Heaven Help Me" and the "Anthem" from *Chess*, along with the duet "I Know Him So Well". All resonated with the audience. The first half closed with an *Aladdin* medley where fun and changes of pace and tempo kept appetites whetted for the next half. Here one of the highlights of the evening for me was the wonderful imitation of the sounds of rain and thunder in "Africa" followed by some lovely harmonies in "Country Roads". The variety continued with a feisty "When You Are Good to Mamma", then moved on to a more nostalgic note with the ladies singing Spice Girls' "Wannabe" then the gentlemen entertaining in red cardies with lively music from Jersey Boys before taking us back to the wonderful and harmonic arrangements of The Beach Boys and songs of The Everly Brothers. The evening closed with a mix from *Starlight Express*. The evening winged its way along on a current of well known music sung by singers who loved what they were doing. Well done.

Elizabeth Donald

Lanark Amateur Musical Society: Chicago

Director: David Dickman; Musical Director: Raymond Tulips; Choreographers: Nikki McLachlan, Jane Masters

Set in the corrupt city of Chicago during the jazz-age of the late 1920s, this production had "All That Jazz!" As night club singer Velma Kelly and vaudeville performer Roxi Hart, the partnership formed between Janet Whyte and Susan Andrews was electric. Both set the tone of the show as they each portrayed their characters with great confidence and delivered outstanding performances through drama, numerous familiar musical numbers and slick choreography. As the 'silver-tongued prince of the court room', Andrew Welsh provided great "Razzle Dazzle" as a charismatic Billy Flynn. Playing the "Keeper of the keys and countess of the clink", Claire Foster made a fine Matron 'Mamma' Morton reminding the jailbirds of the women's block of Cook County Jail, "When you're good to Mamma, Mamma's good to you!" However, in lightening things up a bit, playing Mary Sunshine, Gemma Wilson reminded us that there is "A Little Bit Of Good In Everyone". As Roxie's poor gullible sad sack of a husband Amos, Jamie McCaw brought great amusement to the role and brought the house down with his interpretation of "Mister Cellophane". All remaining principals skilfully characterised their parts well with the remaining ensemble providing great support to the overall production. The lighting, staging effects, music, drama and choreography all added to what was a polished production. A thoroughly enjoyable *Chicago!*

Monklands Light Opera: Disney's Camp Rock the Musical

Director: Steph O'Raw; Musical Director: Patrick McClaire

This musical is a combination of The Disney Channels' *Camp Rock* and *Camp Rock 2, The Final Jam* about rivalry and power, based around the character Mitchie Torres and her friends who arrive at Camp Rock to spend the summer jamming out. However, the flashy Star Camp from across the Lake threatens Camp Rock's existence but Mitchie and her fellow Camp Rockers up their game which results in an ultimate showdown. From the principals to the Camp Rockers and Star Campers, the company collectively delivered a high energy performance through musical numbers, choreography and drama. Playing the lead character, Caoimhe McCann (10) gave an excellent all-round performance as Mitchie, as did Ben MacPherson (12) playing Shane who blended well with Calum McGonigle (14) and Luke McCarthy (11) as Nat and Jason. Great performances were provided by Rosa O'Hanlon (13 - Caitlyn), Morgan Porter (13 - Tess), Jenna Grabiec (12 - Ella), Eva Caldwell (13 - Rosie), Grace Jordan (14 - Peggy), Madison Lawson (13 - Barron), Cody Forrester (14 - Sander), Chloe McMullen (10 - Andi), Rebecca Furneaux (10 - Dana) and Emily Allen (14 - Lucy), with Fiona Cowie, Megan O'Raw and Hannah Robinson playing Axel, Brown and Georgina. Having been a supporter of MLO Youth since it became established in 2018, it is indeed a joy to watch the company grow to perform with such infectious enthusiasm and observe them develop their confidence and performance skills. It is also encouraging to see some from the youth section advancing into the adult section. This was my first visit to Camp Rock which I thoroughly enjoyed and I look forward to your next production.

Shotts St Patrick's Amateur Opera Group: Disney's Mary Poppins Junior

Director & Choreographer: Matthew Coulter; Assistant Directors & Choreographers: Daniel Strang, Ewan Ferguson; Musical Director: Fraser Wilson; Assistant Musical Director: Rachael Totten

Based on one of the most popular Disney movies of all time, Disney and Cameron Mackintosh's *Mary Poppins* has captured our hearts in a whole new way, adapting the stage musical as a practically perfect junior version! Playing the jack-of-all trades Bert, Jack Stewart provided a first-class performance through song but in particular dance as he introduced us to London and the troubled Banks family and also Mary Poppins. This show provides an excellent opportunity to showcase a strong female performer and in playing the title role Aimee More (14) was 'practically perfect' in her portrayal of the iconic Mary Poppins famously portrayed by Julie Andrews. Jessica Murphy (10) and Dylan Hogg (9) provided a great partnership as the young mischievous Jane and Michael Banks, renowned for sending previous nannies packing before Mary Poppins arrives on their doorstep. Making his stage debut, Callum Sweeney (16) gave a brilliant performance as the City banker, George Banks, which was matched by Morgan O'Hare as wife and mother of his children, Winnifred Banks. With so many characters in the show, I regret that I cannot name each and every one individually but all performed to the highest standard. I am always impressed with the quality of the junior shows and this production was without exception. The drama, choreography and the harmonies through singing were simply a joy to watch and listen to and the set, staging and lighting effects all added to the spectacle. This production was indeed one of the highlights of the spring season and I must congratulate not only the cast but the backstage, front of house and the production team for giving us a wonderful evening. It was simply supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!

Ups & Downs Group: Take 24

Directors: Nicole Brown, Alison Adam; Musical Director: Lauren Gilmour

In this the 24th year of the company, the cast were energised and raring to go. The show opened with a selection of musical numbers with an ups and downs theme starting with the song "Everyone Get Up" and finishing with the lively and rhythmic "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go". Within this scene a particular highlight was the duet "Up Where We Belong", performed by Ethan Dunn and Katelyn McCluskey. Scene two provided fourteen one hit wonders including "Play That Funky Music", danced and sung by Paul Fraser, "Kiss Me" - Catriona Owen, "Sugar, Sugar" - Catherine Kennedy and "Waiting For A Star To Fall" - Esther Douglas with supporting dancing provided by Emily Jones, Kieran Quinn, Aaron Jack, Abbie Priestman, Graeme Henderson and Erin Kennedy. Scene three had a numbers theme and the entire cast provided a great presentation of "Three Little Birds", "Ninety-Nine Red Balloons", "Knock Three Times" with many others including "When I'm Sixty-Four" by Paul Callaghan and a highly entertaining "Sixteen Going On Seventeen" ably performed by Gregor Doran and Nel Grady. Act II took us on a trip to the circus with colourful, creatively designed costumes and wide-ranging songs. The scene involved the entire cast and included an entertaining human cannonball (Sean Craighead), hypnotist (Sean Crawford), dancing bears (Scott Dougan, Taylor Milligan and Martin Russell), a clown (Judith Abubakar with dancers Katy Maxwell and Sophie Skilling) and other circus characters. The scene closed appropriately with a selection of songs from *The Greatest Showman* which included "A Million Dreams" (Samantha Pirie), "Come Alive" (Ellis Leggatt) and "This Is Me" and "The Greatest Show" (the entire cast). With such variety in the show, it is difficult to fully capture all elements of the production or name each performer individually. There is much enthusiasm and talent within this group of performers which was fully acknowledged by the audience in their rapturous applause throughout, making it a thoroughly entertaining evening.



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Bohemians Lyric Opera Company: The Wedding Singer

Director: Malcolm Burnett; Musical Director: Finlay Turnbull; Choreographers: Dominic Lewis, Felicity Thomas

Although *The Wedding Singer* has a fairly thin storyline, it is such a fun show packed with lively musical numbers and a show which this cast obviously enjoyed. A romantic comedy, the story follows the life of the much loved wedding singer Robbie Hart who, along with his other two band members, brings joy to weddings, that is until he himself is jilted at the altar and then falls for the waitress Julia who is about to be married to Glen. From start to finish, this entire cast oozed high energy and enthusiasm and looked brilliant in their 80s costumes, wigs and make up. Strong chorus singing and intricate choreography and dance routines involving all of the cast were slick and punchy and appeared effortless to all, bringing life and vitality to the stage. "Saturday Night In The City" and "All About The Green" were just two of the stand out numbers. There were some excellent individual characters in this musical. Fraser Jamieson, Robbie Hart the wedding singer, gave a most natural performance. A loveable character, he appeared totally at ease both vocally and in his interpretation of the part, presenting the various shifts in his mood and emotions very well indeed. Katherine Croan looked impressive and was totally believable as the innocent, naive waitress Julia. With a strong singing voice, she and Fraser complemented each other vocally in their duets. I did enjoy "Come Out Of The Dumpster" and the contrasting "If I Told You". Zoe Brookes, the rather 'bitchy' Linda, was a great rock chic and exuded confidence and glamour in "Let Me Come Home". Kirsten Simpson gave a bubbly performance as Julia's cousin Holly, showing great empathy while supporting Julia and her mixed up feelings. She certainly brought the part to life with her ostentatious advances to Sammy "Right In Front Of Your Eyes". Ross MacPherson presented a strong, dynamic characterisation as George with excellent comic delivery. With his flamboyant costume and hair, he remained totally in character throughout and never overdid the slightly 'camp' mannerisms. "Move That Thang" with Rosie was hilarious. Although very young, Cathy Geddie gave a great comedy portrayal as the agile, spirited Grandma Rosie. Douglas Anderson captured the character of Sammy and completed the wedding band trio which interacted well, bringing out the humour in his lines. Donald Randall came across convincingly as the supercilious, philandering Wall street shark, Glen. The most attractive set with the wedding band trio placed centrally at the back of the stage and the most supportive of stage band at either side looked and worked well. The gutsy ensemble singing and solo numbers were never overpowered by the well controlled band. Scene changes were simple and well executed, resulting in a smooth running production. This was certainly an upbeat, fun filled show full of verve both musically and in the script which is full of comedy moments. Occasionally some of the comedy lines were lost when spoken over the audience laughter. Altogether this was a high energy production with a dynamic and disciplined chorus and solid, convincing principal characters, A real feel good, entertaining production which was well received by the audience. Well done again, Bohs!

Edinburgh Gilbert & Sullivan Society: The Mikado

Director: Alan Borthwick; Musical Director: David Lyle

As the curtain rose revealing a stunning Japanese set with pagodas, cherry blossom and a flashing eyed dragon, we were immediately transported to The Town Of Titipu. The visual impact of this production was quite magnificent with the Willow Pattern back drop in Act II, atmospheric lighting and gorgeous, colourful silky kimonos all adding glamour to the stage. One expects a very high standard of choral singing from this society and indeed this was the case. The opening chorus sung by the gentlemen of Japan was powerful both vocally and in the excellent drilling and proficient use of fans which was commendable by all of the cast. The female chorus was also in fine voice in "Comes A Train Of Little Ladies". The finale of both acts in particular demonstrated the strength of the combined choral singing. The company all moved well too creating interesting, eye catching groupings. The strong principal cast conveyed their characters with conviction. The strolling minstrel Nanki Poo (Sam Selby) and Yum Yum (Jennifer Murray) were a believable romantic couple both singing well and convincing us of their predicament if they were to wed in the marathon "Here's A How-de-do" with its many encores. It must have been exhausting for these two and Ko-Ko who appeared on a scooter, a space hopper and various other modes of transport and yet managed to sing. Ko-Ko (Colin Povey) gave a somewhat subtle performance, perhaps a little less exuberant than some Ko-Kos I have seen but portrayed the part really well. "On A Tree By A River" was beautifully sung with real feeling. The fearsome Katisha (Barbara Scott) has an excellent alto voice and her solo "Alone And Yet Alive" with its wonderful orchestration was one of the highlights of the evening. The Mikado (Zorbey Turkalp) was an imposing figure with a grand bass voice. Pooh-Bah (Simon Boothroyd) knows how to command the stage, got the humour out of every line and was the perfect, pompous, sneering Lord High Everything Else. Pitti-Sing (Claire Lumsden) and Peep-Bo (Annabel Hamid) completed the lively trio of little maids and brought out a real fun element. Pish-Tush (Ian Lawson) and Go-To (Andrew Crawford) were well cast in their roles. There were some memorable ensemble numbers. The blend of voices in the madrigal "Brightly Dawns Our Wedding Day", "See How The Fates Their Gifts Allot" and "The Flowers That Bloom In The Spring" were admirable. This was a fairly traditional production but there were some clever added touches. Ko-Ko's "Little List" was so well written and very witty with its current political references to Donald Trump, the Prime Minister and of course Brexit as well as other modern day issues. This was certainly right up to the minute with details of the latest Brexit vote mentioned only a couple of hours after the result was announced in parliament. Fireworks, a remote control boat and confetti falling all added to the freshness and spectacle of the production. This was certainly a most enjoyable production with a superb orchestra, an excellent chorus and strong principals. Clear diction is so important in G&S operettas and this was worthy of merit. As always it was a real pleasure to attend an EDGAS production.

Edinburgh Music Theatre Company: Sweet Charity

Director: Louise Sables; Musical Director: Matthew Brown; Choreographer: Morgan Scott

With music by Cy Coleman, lyrics by Dorothy Fields and book by Neil Simon, *Sweet Charity* is full of great show stopping musical numbers familiar to most people, although they may not always know which show they came from. The story is about Charity Hope Valentine, a young dance hostess who is looking for true love but who invariably picks the wrong man and never finds it. Rarely off the stage, it is a huge role and it was hard to believe that this was Emma Watson's first principal part. She gave an utterly engaging performance, singing, dancing and acting brilliantly, drawing the audience in to share her vulnerability, optimism and exuberance. This very talented young lady had a great rapport with everyone she was involved with on stage, appearing totally at ease with all aspects of the character. Charity thinks she has struck it lucky when she meets the actor Vittorio Vidal and Cameron Kirby gave a fine performance and sang well as the suave, philandering Vittorio who brings Charity to his room having been given the cold shoulder by his ardent lover Ursula. "If They Could See Me Now", as Charity is elated by what she imagines might be, was a real 'tour de force'. The elegant Ursula, Amanda Jensen, turns up knowing what she wants and makes it quite clear she is not someone to be messed with! Charity is hidden away and watching as Ursula makes advances to Vittorio and this was a well played scene with Charity's actions, reactions and facial expressions quite hilarious. Charity eventually feels she has found real love with Oscar, a tax accountant. Fraser Shand was superb as the nervous, insecure, shy Oscar. He had a real understanding of the part and, when stuck in the lift with Charity, the speed of delivery from both actors was excellent portraying Oscar's panic and Charity's apparent calmness as she tries to assure Oscar that everything will be fine. I must say I did enjoy the charismatic "Sweet Charity" number. In the final moving and emotional scene Charity is let down by Oscar. Despite knowing what she does for a living and initially wanting to marry her, he cannot blot out pictures of Charity with other men. Charity's two best friends at the Fandango Ballroom, Nickie and Helene, were confidently played by Laura McAnna and Susanne Horsburgh. The pair worked very well together and showed great support for Charity in the most expressive duet "Baby, Dream Your Dream". The other hostesses in the club were excellent too with each girl portraying an individual character with seductive movements and animated faces as they leaned out to the audience in "Big Spender", one of the many show stoppers. It was evident that a tremendous amount of work had gone in to rehearsing this show with excellent results. "Rhythm Of Life" led by Jack Bruce as Daddy Brubeck was powerful and exciting with the hippie culture well depicted by the flamboyant, flower power costumes. The choreography in this and indeed throughout was fantastic. "Rich Man's Frug" was outstanding in true Fosse style with every cast member paying great attention to detail and nuance resulting in amazing precision. This too was a visually stunning scene with glitzy, eye catching costumes. "I Love To Cry At Weddings" again showed the versatility of the company with Andrew Todman, Herman, bringing real humour to the number. I could comment on every single musical number but it's hard to find enough superlatives. Suffice to say that this was a fabulous production with excellent direction, superb choreography and gutsy singing and musicality. The well controlled orchestra was in great form and supported the singers, while effective lighting enhanced the whole production. This was a show full of life, energy and excellent characterisations and performances well deserving of its 5-star review and the tremendous reception from the audience. A most professional production!

Encore: Annie Get Your Gun

Directors: Peter Antonelli, Heather Antonelli; Musical Director: Peter Antonelli; Choreographer: Heather Antonelli

This was the first time I had seen the 1999 revival version of *Annie Get Your Gun* which has some omissions from the original but which nevertheless is a grand show. Based on the true story of Annie Oakley and Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, *Annie Get Your Gun* is set to Irving Berlin's wonderful score and contains musical numbers which are well known, so need to be well sung and they were. The leading part, Annie, is huge and all credit to Rebecca Kinross who carried the show along at a good pace. The transition from the feisty, sharp shooting, illiterate Annie to the elegant, love struck Annie was well handled both in characterisation and vocally. She could certainly belt out numbers like "Doin' What Comes Naturally" and "You Can't Get A Man With A Gun", while "Moonshine Lullaby" and "I Got Lost In His Arms" were sung with real tenderness. Annie meets and immediately falls for Frank Butler and Kevin MacConnachie had real charm and personality, bringing out both the comedy and romance in the role. He too gave a strong performance with punchy dialogue and a fine baritone voice well suited to "The Girl That I Marry". These two main characters worked well together and blended vocally in their many duets. Ralph Bannerman and Jen Harris were well cast as the naive young romantics, Tommy and Winnie. Ralph grew in confidence as the show progressed and both gave very natural performances singing very well particularly in their duet "Who Do You Love, I Hope". Gillian Hunter gave a most confident performance as the glamorous, brazen Dolly Tate determined to try to get her hands on Frank and to keep her sister under control. Francis Wilson, the hotel owner, is not a particularly big part but Alison Henry made an immediate impact establishing her character. Ian McKenna playing Charlie Davenport, the show's manager, kept things on track announcing the various scene changes while Alan Taylor was a convincing, rough Buffalo Bill, owner of the Wild West Show. On the evening I was there, Annie's three siblings – Nellie, Jake and Jessie – were delightfully played by Pippa McNeil, Sam Scott and Rachel Pettigrew and brought real charm to the production. There are some real rousing ensemble numbers in this musical which were delivered with great enthusiasm especially "I Got The Sun In The Morning" with its neat

choreography and the finale which really had the audience believing that "There's No Business Like Show Business". The principal characters, all the supporting characters and chorus members together contributed to a most enjoyable evening's entertainment. Colourful costumes and a small but supportive orchestra all enhanced the production. This was undoubtedly a show with the 'feel good' factor which was obviously enjoyed by all on stage and had the audience humming and singing as they left. Very well done, Encore.

Forth Dimension Musical Productions: 40th Anniversary Concert

Musical Director: Caty Kerr

This 40th Anniversary Concert was introduced by the President Gill Sullivan who gave a short history of the company since its birth in 1979 to the present day and the changes which had taken place over the years. There were also programmes from all the productions during the past 40 years and newspaper cuttings with photos and reviews displayed so that this was a most interesting celebration of the company's progress and success. The varied programme included songs which had been performed in musicals and concerts from the past as well as some modern and other well known musical numbers. Although a small company combining a junior and adult chorus, they made a very good sound indeed as an ensemble. A serious young man with a good voice started off the evening with 'Any Dream Will Do' and this was followed by a lively 'I'm A Believer' from the junior chorus. This small group of youngsters obviously enjoyed George Ezra's 'Shotgun' which went with a swing. Young Caty Kerr who has been with the company since she was a child is to be congratulated on her first year as Musical Director. She certainly must have worked the company hard, resulting in some very good choral singing where vocal parts could be heard clearly. 'Seasons Of Love', 'Silly Love Songs', 'Rule The World' and 'Oh What A Circus' were particularly impressive. There were many changes of mood throughout the programme. The light footed trio of young men had great fun with 'The Galway Girl' while the ladies chorus appeared to be enjoying a great girls' night out in 'Oom Pah Pah' which was followed by Caty Kerr's heartfelt 'As Long As He Needs Me.' Gill Sullivan's 'Father And Son' and Michelle Page's 'Secret Love' were sung with conviction, while Cameron Aitchison brought light heartedness to 'Oh What A Beautiful Morning.' What is so commendable about this group is that many people are given the opportunity to have even a line to sing, as well as small ensemble groups. I think practically everyone had a solo spot at some point or other. Nearly every concert I have attended of late has had a number from the popular 'The Greatest Showman' and 'A Million Dreams' was sung with great enthusiasm by the full chorus. Two of the most animated numbers 'Cheap Thrills' and Madonna's 'Like A Prayer' went down extremely well with the audience who demanded encores and joined in with the foot tapping and clapping. This was by no means a static concert. The movement throughout was simple but most effective and everyone looked confident in what they were doing. The relaxed atmosphere on stage and the supportive audience all added to the enjoyment of the evening which had a real party atmosphere. Congratulations, Forth Dimension Musical Productions on your 40th birthday and best wishes for a successful future which I'm sure you will have due to the encouragement you give to your young members both on stage and in progressing to members of the production team Well done!

Lothian Youth Arts & Musicals Company: This Is Us

Directors: Susan French, Malcolm Burnett; Musical Director: James McCutcheon; Choreographer: Fiona Jackson

Celebrating 21 years of Lothian Youth Arts and Musicals Company, a cast of 80 youngsters from the age of 8 presented a mesmerizing evening of song and dance. This was a well constructed programme of diverse musical numbers which varied in style, mood and tempo with one number seamlessly following another, resulting in a most smooth-running production. There were some difficult numbers in the show but this extremely talented cast coped admirably with some very fine musical arrangements, orchestrations and choreography. With a real wealth of talent on stage, it was so encouraging to see so many young people, many of whom had never sung solo before, given the opportunity to shine. It was a brave young lady who confidently opened the show accompanying herself on the ukulele with "The Show" which was followed by "This Is Me" where the company set the bar high with enthusiastic singing and movement which was maintained throughout the evening. In Act I each number was a real pleasure to hear and watch: the sweetly sung "Tomorrow" and "Over the Rainbow", the humorous "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" and "Dentist", the emotive "Home" and "Pulled" sung with real attitude and the lively group numbers, "Stop", "Dancing In The Street" and the fabulously costumed and choreographed "All That Razzle". Act II got off to a cracking start with a powerful "Like A Prayer", "Warrior" and "Rolling In The Deep". I did enjoy "Touch The Sky" from *Brave* which had a real lilt both vocally and in the neatly executed dancing. There were also some lovely, poignant moments. "Where The Lost Things Go" and "Losing My Mind" were beautifully sung with such feeling and expression. "Nobody's Side" was very well delivered and gave an opportunity to hear a most harmonious backing group. "Diva's Lament" was quite a show stopper. These were only a few of the notable numbers. I can honestly say that there was never a weak moment throughout the entire evening and each number was as good as the one before and performed to an extremely high standard. Every person on stage gave it their all and it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm and joy on the faces of this cast who obviously had given up so much of their time to learn musical numbers and energetic dance routines so that they could appear confident and relaxed working together on stage. "Beautiful Dreamer" has always been the company's 'anthem' and always forms part of the finale. It is sung with such sincerity that it never fails to move me. This year, anyone in the audience who had

been a member of this youth group during the past 21 years was invited to stand and sing along with the number and there were many in the audience who had been 'beautiful dreamers' and whose children are now part of the company. A really special moment! This was a very well rehearsed production. So many talented boys and girls gave such accomplished, self-assured performances whether as an individual or as part of a strong chorus of singers and dancers. None of this would happen without the skills and dedication of the production team and many other helpers behind the scenes who put in a power of work. It is so encouraging to see such an enthusiastic group given the opportunity to have so much fun while developing their talents, skills and confidence. The future is certainly bright for L.Y and for musical theatre as these young stars move into the adult world. Happy 21st birthday and a huge well done, LYAMC!

Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association: Blitz!

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

Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* is probably better known and performed more frequently than *Blitz!* and yet this is a musical with an uplifting score and a storyline which combines humour, sadness and nostalgia. Set during World War 2, the plot mainly focuses on two feuding families, the Jewish Blitzteins and the Cockney Lockes with two of the younger members of these very different families falling in love and determined to be together. The opening, with the cast entering through the auditorium making their way on to the stage, immediately established the community spirit as families found their space and settled down on the floor of the underground station defiantly singing "Our Hotel". Jane Renton, the matriarchal Mrs. Blitztein who owns the pickled herring stall, gave a strong performance in this most demanding role. Singing well and maintaining her Jewish accent, she came over as a domineering woman but also showed her softer side and the mixed emotions she had to live through while always trying to do her best for her family and indeed the whole community. "So Tell Me Jack", as she pleads for some guidance from her deceased husband, is a difficult number and was handled extremely well. Alfred Locke who owns the fruit stall has absolutely no time for the Blitzteins and Richard Tebbutt was perfect as the loud, bombastic Alfie who mixed aggression with humour as he and Mrs. Blitztein spit feathers at each other. He and his loveable, patriotic friend Ernie (Bob Crawford) had some most amusing moments, bouncing the humour off each other with their frequent interjections and rousing "As Long As This Is England". Young Carol Blitztein is not an easy part to play and Michaela Turner made a real contrast from the bubbly, very much in love Carol to the anxious Carol who loses her sight in a bomb blast. "Far Away" was sung with true feeling. She and Georgie Locke (Mitchel Gobsill) had a real chemistry and their duet "Opposites" was well played, not at all overdoing the fact that they had been drinking and having fun. Mitchel has a lovely singing voice but was also most convincing in expressing the dilemma he faced when finding out Carol was blind, but acknowledging that he still wanted to marry her. Dougal Affleck quickly established the character of bad boy Harry Blitztein, the 'Jack the lad' of the family. He had a real twinkle in his eye whether flirting with the ladies or getting up to no good as a deserter dealing on the black market. When he finally decides to return to the army his "Duty Calls" was spirited and meaningful. Elsie, one of his girlfriends was well portrayed by Gill Fleming who gave a saucy performance and had a strong singing voice. The many supporting characters were all well cast and believable in their roles. There are some wonderful, catchy chorus numbers and the company were in good voice particularly when they could really let rip in "Who's This Geezer Hitler", "Duty Calls", the scene in Petticoat Lane and the real knees up, "Is This Gonna Be A Wedding?" A delightful group of children bid fond farewells to their emotional families in "We're Going To The Country" and had great fun with their number "Mums and Dads". With so many keen youngsters, this company certainly has a future. All of the musical numbers were sung with enthusiasm and supported well by the orchestra placed at the back of the stage. The big production numbers were neatly moved and I did like the way the auditorium was used with the cast involving the audience in scenarios. Costumes and hair styles had a real war time feel about them very much in keeping with the era. The use of search lights and sound effects was most atmospheric. In other productions of *Blitz!* I have been involved in or seen, there has been a recording of Winston Churchill's announcement and Vera Lynn singing "The Day After Tomorrow", so it was most interesting to see a live broadcaster (Cathy McAlpine) announcing with perfect BBC diction and Vera Lynn (Becky Duncan-Skelton) singing with compassion. This was a production full of warmth, nostalgia and vitality which I and the audience very much enjoyed. Well done, MAMA.

Portobello and Joppa Church Drama Group: Brodie! The Musical

Directors: Charlotte Anderson, Shona Cowie; Musical Director: Nancy Kent

Developing from a small group of keen actors in St Philip's Church in 1969 to this most accomplished and larger Portobello and Joppa Parish Church Drama Group of today, it seems fairly fitting that to celebrate their 50th anniversary the group chose to present *Brodie! The Musical* written in 1996 by two of its members. This musical set in 18th century Edinburgh was written for the company by Gavin Booth with original music by the company's Musical Director Nancy Kent. According to Gavin, "It was written for a group in which there are 'no stars' and which always tries to choose shows which give the chorus lots to do!". Well, this fantastic musical certainly fulfils that, giving the chorus lots to do but I would say that there was a galaxy of stars on that stage. With 25 named characters plus a few townspeople and 6 children it would be true to say that every person on stage had a significant role and was a believable character whether a stalwart of society, a mistress, a rogue or a lady of the night. The script tells the true story of Deacon William Brodie, an upright

citizen by day but yet a rogue, thief and philanderer. It is not an easy part to play and whilst I am reluctant to single out individual performances in such a large, strong cast, credit must be given to Willie French who portrayed the different sides to Brodie's character most admirably through both dialogue and song. There is a huge amount of humour in the script which had been updated slightly (who knows we might have a woman Prime Minister some day!) and this came over very well indeed by all the characters especially Brodie's gang who were almost panto like in the scenes planning their crimes. The differentiation between the Old and New Town residents was well depicted not only by their contrasting poor and lavish costumes but by their attitude, speech and mannerisms. As well as humour, there were some serious moments throughout with unrequited love and the final demise of Brodie. Much of the fun, humour and pathos was conveyed through the music and songs. There is so much variety in this score – lilting Scottish music, beautiful ballads, jazz and calypso style music. The songs and orchestrations evoked feelings through the emotion of the performers. The rousing opening "Where's Brodie?", "Suspensions" and "Wha's Like Us?" showed the strength and vitality of the chorus compared with the stillness in "Brodie's Death Music" which demonstrated wonderful harmonious singing. Fun numbers, "Ghosts" and "They Tell Me", contrasted so well with the heart rendering "Why Not Me?" and "If You Ever Need Me". I really believed that Brodie's mistresses wanted to be with him in their haunting duet. Very clever use was made of back projection setting the various scenes whether in the High Street, Kirk Yard or the Tavern which had a real 3-dimensional feeling. The continuity of scene changes in this way was most effective and allowed for better use of the small stage. The story is linked by a narrator/barmaid Effie and I must say Katie Bell's narration was animated and crystal clear as was her number "Get Out While You Can". The narrator pulling the front gauze across for scene changes also worked well. This was an extremely well directed production both musically and in the staging, The use of a lower playing area and the auditorium as well as the stage gave scope for lots of action and variety in pace. I am always impressed by this company with so many talented individuals and an ensemble whose choral singing is excellent. There is real team work and camaraderie here. It is always refreshing to see something new and inspiring and this was certainly the case with this production. I applaud the company's achievements over the past 50 years and hope that they will continue to grow in future years. Thank you so much for a thoroughly enjoyable evening's entertainment.

Showcase Musical Productions: Showcase Jukebox
Director: Andy Johnston; Musical Director: David McFarlane

A varied programme of eclectic musical numbers resulted in a well compiled *Showcase Jukebox* which had something to please all tastes in music. A wonderfully arranged "A Million Dreams" immediately established the strength of the choral singing and throughout the evening the musical arrangements and harmonies were most impressive. This group certainly knows how to put across contrasting numbers, whether it be a pensive "You Walk With Me", the uplifting "Viva La Vida", rousing "Beach Boys Medley" or the ever moving "He Ain't Heavy (He's My Brother)", to mention only a few of the many memorable ensemble numbers. Showcase is also most fortunate in having a wealth of talented soloists. "She Used To Be Mine" from the musical *Waitress* was a new one to me and was melancholy and wistful. "Who Wants To Live Forever" was meaningful and strong. The section dedicated to absent friends was extremely emotive with the chorus again in fine voice singing "All I Have To Do Is Dream", "Caledonia" and the hair raising "Bridge Over Troubled Waters". The second half of the programme had some real fun numbers with the comedy duo on the "Trail Of The Lonesome Pine" followed by "Happy/Get Lucky". Three of the most powerful numbers were "Pride (In The Name of Love)", "Rise Up" and "Up Here On My Own" sung with strength and passion by outstanding female soloists. "Defying Gravity" again led by a strong soloist was another winner. The stirring "One Day More" gave the opportunity to hear more confident soloists and a resounding chorus. I have mentioned only a few of the numbers on the programme but truth to say that every number was excellent. The final "Love And Mercy" and "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me" are meaningful to the cause of this company who to date have raised over £280,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support – an amazing achievement! David McFarlane, Musical Director, has done a grand job with this first class company. I have also to sing the praises of the accompanist Andy Thomson who supported the singers in their 27 numbers with very little respite. And of course the running order of the evening was announced with fun and humour by the Director Andy Johnston as he told the audience about each number being performed and also about each soloist in a most relaxed and amusing fashion. As always with Showcase, this was a thoroughly enjoyable evening's entertainment by a most talented company of singers, all of whom never fail to deliver. I very much look forward to their main production in September.

Southern Light Opera Company: My Fair Lady
Director: Andy Johnston; Musical Director: Crawford Moyes; Choreographer: Louise Williamson

Let us cut to the chase and say, in my view, this was musical theatre at its best! From the first note, Crawford Moyes' twenty-three piece orchestra sparkled, without ever becoming overbearing. No need to précis the plot of this most evergreen of musical comedies. Instead, it must be said, the standard of the evening was set by Rebekah Lansley as a lovely Eliza Doolittle and a pleasantly restrained John Bruce as Henry Higgins. So often this latter part is performed with rumbustiousness in the extreme, but tonight, John proved that a quieter Higgins was just as effective. Rebekah's portrayal of the flower-girl-made-good showed a definite understanding of the character – a facet of performing that is

so often missed these days. The standard of performing by the two lead characters was mirrored in Alfred P Doolittle (Keith Kilgour), Colonel Pickering (Alan Hunter), Freddy Eynsford-Hill (David Bartholomew) and Mrs Higgins (Averyl Nash), each of whom displayed exceptional talent in acting, delivery and choreography. The SLO appears to have a bottomless pit of high quality talent when it comes to awarding principal parts. However, it doesn't stop there, even the minor principals score in this show. With some lovely one-liners, Mrs Pearce (Judith Walker), Mrs Eynsford-Hill (my NODA District 6 colleague, Dorothy Johnstone), and Zoltan Karpathy (Kerr-Alexander Syme) all demonstrated how to get the most from the minor parts, assisted in no small way by a well-written book! Let us mention, now, the company as a whole. The sizeable SLO chorus shone as usual, and, when it came to production numbers, the show simply exceeded any superlatives at my discretion. "Get Me To The Church On Time" was just one example of Louise Williamson's superbly energetic and imaginative choreography. Finally, praise must go to Andy Johnston's exemplary, traditional direction, which allowed the SLO to glow in the beautiful King's Theatre. This, together with sympathetic lighting, first class sound mixing and well-designed sets, set the standard for other shows in the District! Thank you to the Southern Light Opera for inviting me to review your show, and also for the hospitality shown to us at the interval. Well done to all!

Mike Pendlowski

DISTRICT No 7: Fife

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society

At the end of their recent 80th anniversary concert, NODA Scotland Councillor, Stuart McCue-Dick, was delighted to present a 70 year long service award to one of the members of Kirkcaldy G & S Society, Margaret Mentiplay.

Margaret's first show with Kirkcaldy G & S Society was *The Gondoliers* in 1949/50 which was their first fully costumed show after the war. She sang mostly in the chorus, but did step out a few times to play minor roles such as Isabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Margaret's friendship with a young gentleman, named Ivan, who also sang in the Society began to blossom and they eventually married and had two daughters who accompanied Margaret to the presentation. Margaret and her husband Ivan became stalwarts of the Society. They were also great supporters of NODA and enjoyed attending many NODA Scotland Conferences over the years at Peebles Hydro.

When Margaret retired from singing, she remained helping behind the scenes. She has been a tremendous supporter of Kirkcaldy G & S Society over her 70 years and is a Life Member of the company.

Stuart thanked Margaret on behalf of NODA for her 70 years of dedicated service to amateur theatre, ensuring Kirkcaldy G & S Society has gone from strength to strength.



Carnegie Youth Theatre: Sister Act

Director: Colin Baird; Musical Director: Brian Beaton; Choreographer: Jenny Figures

Taking a musical originally written for adults and transferring it to a cast in their teens is never an easy task. However, Carnegie YT in their own inimitable fashion, managed to pull this off successfully. Opening with a superb Deloris Van Cartier (Kirsty Donaldson), this young lady set the standard for the whole evening! The character of Deloris is rarely off-stage, but Kirsty's excellent singing and first class stage presence ensured that each of her duets, trios and concerted numbers were truly memorable. In the convent it is important that, together with acting-sister Deloris, the other Sisters all gel, bearing in mind the quite different characters allocated to them. Tonight, Sisters Mary Robert (Beth Donaldson), Mary Patrick (Charlie Stewart) and Mary Lazarus (Erica Russell) did just that. It is never easy taking a part like Mary Lazarus – originally written for an older actress – and asking a teenager to carry it off successfully. However, Erica appeared to add to her tender years, presenting a very humorous performance in this character role – especially when she became a rapper in Act II. Similar sentiments apply to the Mother Superior (Madeline Gilroy). This character, again usually an older person's role, is blessed with a couple of first class solos, both of which were performed with confidence. To the gentlemen: Jack Todd was great as Monsignor O'Hara the quiet Irish priest, who quickly takes a liking to Deloris' up-tempo hymn singing; Aaron Angeloni as the gangster boyfriend Curtis succeeded in making this part as menacing as possible, and, together with his henchmen, TJ (Guy Bathgate), Joey (Sean Cameron) and Pablo (Ciaran Young), brought another side to the plentiful humour in *Sister Act*. "Lady In The Long Black Dress" was first class, both in terms of hilarious antics and singing. Lastly, Eddie (Luis Mutch), must be congratulated on an outstanding performance, both in singing and movement. Technically the show looked good, both lighting-wise and set-wise (the set possibly being a little on the large side for the confines of Carnegie Hall). However, I wasn't the one who had to manoeuvre round off-stage trucks and flattage during the show! Sound too was good, once an initial band/cast balance was sorted out. Congratulations to the production team of Colin Baird (Director), Brian Beaton (Musical Director) and Jenny Figures (Choreographer). This tried and tested team, once again, brought an excellent production to Dunfermline! Many thanks for inviting me to review this show and for the opportunity to meet the cast afterwards.

Kelty Musical Association: Chicago

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

Following on from the artistic success of *Jesus Christ Superstar* last year, one wonders what Kelty Musical Association could do to follow that. The answer is, this production of *Chicago*. From the opening music, MD Ross Hamilton and his thirteen-piece band ensured that we were going to savour an evening to remember. The band, in their upstage, high level, location was in superb form on this, their opening night! The cast were no less together and their enthusiasm spilled over at each and every appearance. Gary Gibb's direction was thoughtful, novel in places, and showed a definite understanding of the musical. However, without wishing to cause a domestic incident! I was even more delighted to watch Lynne Gibb's extremely well-drilled choreography – it was a pleasure to view some out-of-the-ordinary moves, which were extremely accurately executed by both the dancers and indeed the whole cast at times. Principal-wise, I can usually pick out my favourite performers in a show, and then have difficulty hiding any favouritism in my review! Tonight was an exception. The standard of principal work was exceedingly high. Velma (Vicky Sharp) and Roxie (Amy Elder) played so very well together both in singing and acting. Roxie's vent puppet impersonation in "We Both Reached For The Gun" did ultimate justice to one of my favourite numbers in the show. Velma has the good fortune to be blessed with some of the finest numbers in the show, including "All That Jazz" and "I Can't Do It Alone", but none which would surpass her duet with Mama Morton (Rebecca Anderson) in "Class". Rebecca brought out the sinister side of Mama Morton, whilst still offering a poignancy in the aforementioned song. Mark Grieve gave us a supremely confident performance as Billy Flynn, the smooth-talking lawyer, while, at the other end of the scale, Darren Johnson as Amos Hart, tugged at the audience's heart strings as the beleaguered, duped husband who finds great difficulty in making folks "notice him" ("Mr Cellophane"). Minor principals – Fred Casely (Fraser McLaughlin) and Mary Sunshine (Derek Walker) – gave lovely performances, Derek's drag act as the local reporter never faltering! Finally, of course, we never forget the chorus – and how could we tonight! In fine voice and matching movement, together with the semi-chorus of Velma's five accomplices in Cook County Jail, they rounded off a show to be proud of! Well done, Kelty Musical Association! Many thanks for the invite and the question is – "How do you top that next year?"

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society: Patience

Director: Robin O'zóg; Musical Director: John Howden

Kirkcaldy G&S Society has, this year, chosen to take one of the less-frequently performed operettas and set it in the 60s – the era of flower power. This is probably the third time I have witnessed this time-change in the last year, and have no doubt that it works. Director Robin O'zóg has his hands full both directing and performing (Colonel Calverley). To anyone with less experience this would be a mammoth task. However, Robin appears to thrive on it! He, together with Nick Temperley (Lieutenant the Duke of Dunstable) and Steve Pimentil (Major Murgatroyd), form a trio who work well together and achieve maximum acclaim from the audience. I'm sure, W S Gilbert would also have approved of the

Sergeant Pepper costumes in Act Two, had they been heard of at that time! Completing the gents principals, Michaels, McFarlane and Scott as Archibald Grosvener and Reginald Bunthorne respectively, both worked well together to bring a pleasant mix of hilarity and pathos to their characters. To the principal ladies: Jilly Martin (Patience) sang and acted well in her role as the naïve milk(bar)maid. Her confusion with Bunthorne and Grosvener's changing characters causing ever more hilarity. The three Ladies – Angela, Saphir and Ella (Caroline Warburton, Sharon Edgar and Eliza Twaddle) combined performing experience and inexperience to form a trio which showed no signs of the latter! In fact, their "In a Doleful Train" with Bunthorne, and Saphir and Angela in their quintet with the Duke, Major and Colonel, were highlights of the show. Lady Jane (Elaine Young) joined with Bunthorne in one of the best duet's in the operetta "So Go To Him and Say To Him!", having previously shown her prowess as a cellist! One final character was introduced into the show: David Potter (The Reporter). David, characterising the Scottish broadcaster Fyfe Robertson – known to many of a certain minimum age! – effectively narrated the show. I felt this rather unnecessary and would aid a concert version of the operetta. However, here we had the whole show plus a Narrator. That said, the Society has pulled together to form a most enjoyable show with excellent chorus work, due in no small way to MD John Howden. Technically, a very workable and attractive set by John Urquhart, together with good lighting (I could see everyone!) by John Allen and accurately operated sound by Solus Technical Services, made for a very pleasant evening. Many thanks KGASS for inviting me along to review your show!

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society: 80 Years of Popular Music

Musical Director: Robert Gardner

As part of their 80th anniversary celebrations Kirkcaldy G&S Society presented a most enjoyable concert of popular music from the past 80 years starting in the 1940s. The opening "It's A Grand Night For Singing" set the tone for the concert and indeed aptly summed up the evening. The first half took us on journey from the 1940s to the 1970s and highlights included a close harmony group of ladies with "Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree". Robin and chorus with "Streets of London" and a rousing finale of "Bohemian Rhapsody". The second half took us from the 1980s to the current day opening with "Love Changes Everything" from *Aspects Of Love*. Highlights included Jennifer and chorus with "Theme from The Vicar of Dibley" and a medley from "La, La Land". A beautiful instrumental interlude from Douglas, Frances and Robert led us into a final selection from *The Gondoliers* which will be the next show from the club. The evening was a fitting celebration and congratulations to the whole chorus for producing a most glorious sound. Well done to Musical Director Robert Gardener and accompanist Douglas Clark for a well-balanced programme that captured the changing music of the past 80 years.

Stuart McCue-Dick

Kirkcaldy Youth Music Theatre: Chicago – High School Edition

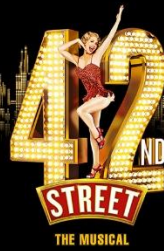
Director: Monica Holland; Musical Director: Alan Urquhart; Choreographer: Gillian Peggie

I always try hard to find a flaw in a KYMT production, just so that I can maybe offer a word of advice in my report. However, this year as always, saw a show performed by juniors to the standard of experienced adults! An excellent band under the baton of Alan Urquhart opened the show from their upstage pit, and proceeded to lead the cast through the host of well-known numbers that form this popular musical. At this time, I should say that even with a thirteen-piece band, the sound balance was never questionable in any way, thanks to in-house sound and operation! "And All that Jazz" led by a fantastic Velma (Niamh Corkey) gave us a taste of what was to come. Niamh's singing and diction, together with pace of delivery and stage presence, was a pleasure to behold! The "Cell Block Tango" introduced Velma's fellow murderesses (Holly McIlhatton, Cara Hayes, Emma Simpson, Catriona Gauld and Maisie Kitchen) performing some skilful choreography with cell bar trucks, while still augmenting the well-drilled ensemble in the vocals. Matron Mama Morton (Josie Chalmers), proved that it doesn't take a large lady to carry off this role. Josie's petite form gave more than adequate weight to this part and her rendition of "When You're Good to Mama". Billy Flynn (Ross McKenzie) made a fine entry, descending an eleven tread staircase, with risers illuminating as he took each step. Ross too was in fine voice throughout, but especially in his opening number "All I Care About Is Love". This was quickly followed by his fun "duet" with Roxie (Dominika Valente) "We Both Reached For The Gun" – one of my favourite two songs in the show! Dominika may have been a mute ventriloquist's dummy in this number, but showed her excellent vocal qualities later in "Roxie", "Me and My Baby" and other duets and ensemble numbers. Then we come to Amos (Blair Hollingworth). How good must it make an actor feel, when he finishes a number and gets a huge "Aaaww!" from the audience, before they break out into spontaneous, well-deserved applause! This is exactly what happened at the end of my other favourite song in the show "Mr Cellophane". Credit must be given to all the minor principals taking part in numerous scenes and vignettes throughout. Their enthusiasm joined that of the ensemble, to put the icing on the cake for Monica Holland's first class direction and Jillian Peggie's wonderfully busy choreography. Well done, KYMT!

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Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association: Evita

Director: Malcolm J Burnett; Musical Director: Suzanne Stewart; Choreographer: Clare Stewart

Evita is a difficult and demanding show for any society to perform. However, given a production team of Director (Malcolm Burnett), Musical Director (Suzanne Stewart) and Choreographer (Clare Stewart), LADAMA have risen to the challenge and scored highly. In the title role, Fiona MacKenzie doesn't disappoint. She captures the role perfectly as the ambitious young woman who blackmails Magaldi (Adam Campbell) into giving her a new life in Buenos Aires. Fiona's singing and acting brought to life the highs and lows of Eva Peron's short and troubled life. The role of Che Guevara requires an actor with confidence and ultimate stage presence, and tonight we were lucky enough to see Mark Grieve in the role. Mark's experience in stage craft made Che stand out for me in this production. Juan Peron (David Mutch), like Eva, was completely absorbed in his role, and, like all the principals, was vocally excellent. In the smaller, but nonetheless important role of Peron's Mistress, Laura Campbell gave a first class performance of her one solo "Another Suitcase In Another Hall". The chorus and dancers were a credit to the show. There is a huge range of singing styles called for in *Evita*, but Musical Director Suzanne Stewart made it appear straightforward for LADAMA's large ensemble, who, together with their dancers, choreographed by Clare Stewart, formed the icing on the cake for a wonderful evening of emotional musical theatre. Well done, LADAMA! And many thanks for inviting me to review your show!

MAOS – The Markinch Amateur Operatic Society: Annie

Director: Iain Hughes; Musical Director: Martin Tollick; Choreographer: Valda Wicks

A traditional interpretation of this well-known musical provided an enjoyable evening of entertainment. The young performers were very much the highlight of this production, especially the very cute Molly (Holly Kitchen), who stole the attention several times during the show! Maisie Dury in the title role, showed exceptional stage presence and delivery – both spoken and sung. Miss Hannigan (Jackie Beatson) maintained a flawless well-planned character as the rather worse-for-wear, grumpy and tyrannical principal of the orphanage. Hannigan was ably assisted by Rooster (Craig Spence) – taking over the part at extremely short notice – and his floozy girlfriend Lily (Brogan Orkney), in their plan to claim to be Annie's long-lost parents and, therefore, get the reward put up by Oliver Warbucks. This latter character has to demonstrate a wide range of emotions from a blustering business tycoon to a soft-hearted father figure to Annie, and, I must say, this was most effectively done tonight by Glen McGill. Grace Farrell (Julie Stirling) provided good characterisation as the person who could keep Oliver Warbucks in hand. Minor principals were all well cast and made the most of each individual character. Finally, the chorus: within Markinch Musical Society, enthusiasm is the name of the game, and tonight was no exception – be it in acting, singing or choreography. All of the above is due, in no small measure, to the excellent production team. The experience of this team has obviously rubbed off well and been accepted by the entire cast! Technically, simple sets worked well and allowed the production to flow from one scene to another with minimum down time between. Costumes looked good and fitted the period of the show. Lighting and sound both worked well! Thank you MMS for inviting me to your 2019 show, for presenting a fine evening's entertainment and for the warm Markinch welcome received. It also gave me much pleasure to co-present Long Service Awards, along with Honorary President Bob Grant – especially a diamond bar awarded to Ian Thomson.

St Andrews Musical Society: My Fair Lady

Director: Kris Mordente; Musical Director: Lynn Smith; Choreographer: Donna Reilly

First performed in the UK in 1958, *My Fair Lady* has long been a favourite of amateur companies up and down the country. Tonight, in the Byre Theatre, SAMS offered an enjoyable performance, unfortunately a rather gentlemen-light chorus didn't achieve full justice for some of the many memorable chorus numbers in the show. That aside, however, a generally young cast were well used in choreographer Donna Reilly's energetic production numbers – "Get Me To The Church On Time" being a case in point. Director Kris Mordente has obviously worked hard with both chorus and principals. However, small things niggled, for example when Pickering describes Eliza's hair to Scotland Yard as "Brown, brown, brown!" when it obviously is not! Principal-wise the company were fortunate to have Alice Gold and Roy Verner as Eliza and Higgins, Alice, demonstrating well the profound difference between Eliza the flower-girl and Eliza the lady. Colonel Pickering (Andrew Johnson) and Freddy Eynsford-Hill (Colin Sutherland) both found good interaction with their fellow-principals. My favourite character of the evening, however, was Alfred P Doolittle (Alan Tricker). I have always been of the opinion that the performer, as well as the Director, has to understand the character, and Alan obviously has done just that. In this way, every bit of humour (and there is so much in *My Fair Lady*) can be brought to the fore. As is the norm with SAMS productions, the orchestra is hidden away in the scene dock, which cannot make it easy to connect with the performers, albeit a waist-up relay of the MD appears on a monitor at the rear of the auditorium. Nevertheless, MD Lynn Smith did well in keeping her cast under strict control. Sets by John Urquhart worked well and kept the already relatively small performance space as unrestricted as possible. Sound balance at the top of the show was initially felt to be band-heavy. However, this was sorted out in the first few numbers, allowing the remainder of the performance to be of good balance. Well done, SAMS, and thank you for inviting me along to your show! Looking forward to your next production of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and hoping you can encourage more gents along to join your ranks!

Tayside Opera: Macbeth

Director: Alan Borthwick; Musical Director: Richard Johnston

After their 50th anniversary production of Verdi's *La Traviata* last year, the company took the brave decision to perform Verdi's challenging *Macbeth* – a challenge they rose to magnificently under the superb directorial team of Richard Johnston and Alan Borthwick. The simple, sombre staging and atmospheric lighting set the tone for the murderous deeds to follow perfectly. Alister Allan's portrayal of Macbeth as a decent man brought down by the aspirations of his strong willed wife, was sensitively portrayed as shown in his aria "Compassion, honour, love" in Act IV. Frances Taylor as Lady Macbeth gave a powerful performance in portraying the character's fall from scheming noblewoman to madness. Her strong soprano voice equally at home in the light-hearted brindisi "Fill up the Cup" and in the tragic "Yet here's a spot" in the sleep walking scene in Act IV. Piran Legg made a striking Banquo and his rich bass voice was superb, shown to its best for me in his solo "O, how the darkness falls from heaven". Michael Doroszenko gave a strong performance as Macduff – his tenor voice pulling at the heart strings in "Ah, the paternal hand". Strong support was given by Paul McKay (Malcolm), Struan Davidson (Physician) and Flora Caldwell (Lady-in-Waiting). The chorus singing was excellent throughout and was particularly rousing in the closing hymn to victory "Hail, oh King". The 20 piece orchestra, under the careful baton of Richard Johnston, played beautifully and sensitively so that never once did they overpower the singers. Congratulations to all at Tayside Opera.

Douglas J Clark

DISTRICT No 8: Borders Area

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

Act 1 Youth Community Theatre

LOUISA'S STORY

When Louisa Goldie visited The Foundling Museum before her major heart surgery, little did she know that it would lead to meeting the Duchess of Cambridge. Louisa was scheduled to have her surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital, who partner with The Foundling Museum to run art projects involving patients to help in their convalescence. Emma, the coordinator for the project, met Louisa during her recovery period and was intrigued by her interest in the Hetty Feather books written by her personal friend Jacqueline Wilson. Emma was very impressed with young Louisa and also her own personal story about her interest in musical theatre, with a dream to play orphan Annie one day. When Louisa's dream came true to play the role at Act 1 Youth Theatre, Hawick, she was so proud to let Emma know about her good news. Emma, at that time was in the process of organising the Royal visit to The Foundling Museum and felt that Louisa would be the perfect young person to meet The Duchess, who was considering becoming a patron of the museum. The honour of having tea and a chat with the Duchess was a wonderful experience for Louisa, who had taken the weekend off *Annie* rehearsals to make the trip to London. Louisa shared the role of Annie with Marli Kiore in September 2018.



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Act 1 Youth Community Theatre: The Sound of Music

Director: Deborah Lyons; Musical Director: Ann Witherington; Choreographer: Rachel Inglis

Act 1 Youth Community Theatre has only been in existence for four years, and my have they developed well! This company tries to bring in various members of the local community to take part in their shows and this year they have excelled in the characters they have been able to persuade to take part. Some of them have never been on stage before, some have worked with the adult musical theatre company in Hawick, and they all blended well together under the experienced hand of Deborah Lyons who directed the show. The scene changes were slick and the settings complemented the action. There is little for men to do in this show so in order that they were kept active the back stage crew doubled up as party goers and soldiers. There was a little problem with sound quality at one part of the show I attended but this did not detract from a super all round performance. Ann Witherington, the Musical Director, had put together a nice small band whose playing was excellent and suitably complemented the performance on stage. Although there isn't a great deal of chorus work in this show, the ensemble of nuns was in excellent form vocally. Their harmonies in the "Morning Chorus" was excellent, as was their rendition of the "Canticle" in the wedding scene which was sung with passion and confidence. There then follows the scenes when Maria is being sent to the Von Trapp family as Governess. Deborah Lyons not only directed this show but took on the role as Mother Abbess. Oh, my what a wonderful voice she has and her rendition of "Climb every Mountain" was outstanding. She was aided and abetted by her sister nuns Margaretta (Joyce Tinlin), Berthe (Gillian Pringle), and Sophia (Anne Clark). They were very good and I liked their choreography in the Abbess office. They made good use of the stage. The success of this show is mainly dependant on Maria and the children. In this production Rachel Inglis sang beautifully. She had a strong and confident personality and together with her excellent singing voice this was a performance to remember. In addition to her acting talents Rachel also choreographed the show and all of the movement whether by the children or adults was faultless. The Von Trapp children (Friedrich – Daniel Felix, Louise – Jessica Scott, Brigitta – Marli Kiore, Kurt – Leonardo Felix, Marta – Erin Clarke, Gretl – Ruby Watson) steal the show and this was no exception, giving a lively, confident, performance of singing, dancing and acting talent. They all played their individual parts very well and when they sang together you could almost feel the smiles from the audience. I was sorry that I didn't see the alternate family of Aiden Cannon – Friedrich, Carla Porter – Louisa, Faris Alkhoury – Kurt, Hope Stewart – Brigitta, Marly Domingo – Marta, Rylee Domingo – Gretl. I am sure that if they were as good as the ones I saw the audience would have enjoyed a treat. Of course, the show is not just about Maria and the children and Michael Aitken who played Captain von Trapp was as good as I have seen. I understand whilst Michael does some singing in the local area, he has not performed on stage in a musical before. You would not have known it. His performance and transition from the confident bearing as the naval captain being quite strict to the family man who falls in love with Maria was well portrayed. I hope he continues with this new found hobby as he will be an asset to any company he joins. The parts of Elsa Schraeder and Max Detweiler were very well done by Craig Douglas and Kim Jeffrey, I liked Craig's characterisation of Max and Kim's performance as the upper crust countess type person was good. I particularly liked the trio with the Captain when they sang "I". Mairi Johnston as Liesl was delightful and worked well with Alexander Edwards who played the part of Rolf. She has a good voice and their duet "I Am 16" was very good indeed. They seemed quite relaxed in their roles as the young lovers. The parts of Franz and Frau Schmidt, the butler and housekeeper, were ably played by Rob Goldie and Vivien Armstrong. The other supporting characters all as important as each other were all well played by the individuals who played them. I had a very enjoyable evening at Hawick and I thank you all for a superb performance and for the socialising afterwards.

*Stewart Cameron***Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society: Sweet Charity**

Director & Musical Director: Jeff Thomson; Choreographer: Marie McCullough

It's a brave and dedicated production team that takes on the challenge of directing such an iconic and challenging piece of musical theatre. Bursting with enthusiasm, the impressive orchestra was excellent from overture to finale. The evolving and revolving sets were massively successful in effect with an artistic lighting plot to complement them throughout. The use of colour in lighting, costume and set was perfectly coordinated to create every mood imaginable during the rollercoaster saga of Charity's journey to find true love. The massive role of Charity (Carla McColgan) was superbly played. She truly inhabited every ounce of this quirky, upbeat, hopeful character and danced with conviction and sang each challenging note to perfection. It has to be said that she stole the show. The seductive red glow of the Fandango Ballroom introduced the hostess girls Nickie (Ruth Davidson) and Helene (Jan Baird) in a sexy "Big Spender". Both girls played the stunning and sassy friends of Charity, who wowed the audience with their "Baby Dream Your Dream", a comical and harmonic number, and likewise joined forces with Charity for the rooftop showstopper "There's Gotta Be Something Better Than This". Excellent! The outstanding choreography shone throughout the whole show, honouring the Bob Fosse style of movement and rhythm, but individualised to suit the company. Examples of this, featuring the boys, were "Rich Man's Frug", in a fabulous gold and turquoise theme, and "I'm A Brass Band", with the company in red and white and showing extra flare in tap shoes. There is no doubt that one of the best known and most popular numbers in the show is the ever popular "Rhythm Of Life", which was psychedelically colourful and spiritually

uplifting, giving hip leader Daddy Brubeck (William Pearson) and the whole company a wonderful opportunity to shine. On the subject of shining, the sweet natured, claustrophobic accountant Oscar (Clark Eaton Turner) was superbly captured and he characterised his role to perfection. His terrifying elevator experience was interpreted with manic expertise and his fabulous melodic duet with Charity, "Bravest Individual" was an harmonic delight. Even from the broken down fairground chair he managed to charm and calm us all, including Charity with his amorous, "Sweet Charity". The partnership with Charity was excellent throughout. Another inspired coupling was the arrogant Vittorio (Jack McAuley) and his diva girlfriend Ursula (Lynsay Cullen). Their passionate and heated relationship worked very well. The bedroom scene was spectacularly slick and hilarious, with the shenanigans surrounding the closet scene creating side-splitting audience laughter. Top marks for a fabulous rendition of "If My Friends Could See Me Now" by Charity and "Too Many Tomorrows" by Vittorio. Having full control of the sleazy character Herman (Daniel Wilson), the owner of the Fandango ballroom, finally reveals his softer side to star in the popular choral number, "I Love To Cry At Weddings". The show was excellently supported by chorus, superb dancers, strong minor roles and even a live dog to provide crowds, congregation and customers who all added to the colourful drama surrounding the life of Charity Hope Valentine. Many congratulations on an outstanding achievement.

Hawick Amateur Operatic Society HAOS: Hairspray

Director & Musical Director: Derek Calder; Choreographer: Anne Anderson

Perfectly cast, and starring in her first major role was the epitome of bubbly teenager Tracy (Niamh Scott). She proved that the larger than life character was made for her. She never missed a beat in her opening number, "Good Morning Baltimore", and strove to live the dream of starring in the Corny Collins Show. Solos, duets or quartets, there was nothing too taxing for this young lady, who had so obviously worked really hard on this massive role and was totally at one with the loveable character. She certainly did "Hear The Bells" with audible success. Top marks, Niamh! Tracy's best friend Penny (Natalie Darcy) was excellently handled. With her ditsy mannerisms and high pitched voice, it gave resonance to her portrayal of the character. Corny Collins was in the stellar hands of a long standing member, Craig McCredie. With slick moves and hairstyle, this Michael Ball lookalike, orchestrated the "Nicest Kids In Town", "The Madison" and of course "Hairspray" with total ease and flare, giving the confident and youthful company a chance to dance and shine throughout. Beautifully timed and executed to introduce the mother/daughter relationships in the show, was the fabulous, "Mama, I'm A Big Girl Now" number. Tracy and Edna (Kev Sykes), Velma (Helen Hogan), Amber (Katie Melvin), Prudy Pingleton (Louise Szoneberg) and Penny truly led with strong vocals and were perfectly supported by the backing chorus for this fabulous number. The bitchy, pushy, mother figure of Velma's character was epitomised in her excellent rendition of "Miss Baltimore Crabs" and she superbly acted out her dirty tactics to support her bully of a daughter. Amber was superbly animated by a very talented young woman. Her accomplished acting, facial expressions, singing and dancing prowess was to her great credit, especially during her delivery of "Cooties". Tracy's love interest, Link (Alexander Edwards), was portrayed by a talented young man, with the hip swivelling moves, and lots of Elvis-like charisma. No wonder Tracy fell for him, creating the perfect feel good setting for the highlight "It Takes Two". Tracy and Edna's transformation scene "Welcome To The Sixties" was slick and busy. It featured the fabulous Mr Pinkie (Sam John) and the brilliant Dynamites (Zoe John, Claire Oliver & Kim Jeffrey) who added their harmonic lines to this superb number, ending with some dynamic scat singing from the trio. The role of Seaweed (Fraser Jack) came to life through his passionate and funky performance, with a youthfully and exuberant delivery of "Run And Tell That" with Penny. Both youngsters were really well cast. The Act I finale was truly in great hands. Larger than life character Motormouth Maybelle (Caroline Wilkinson) was superbly played, delivering her first big belter of a number "Big Blonde And Beautiful" to a rousing ovation and also receiving a well deserved standing ovation in Act II for her outstanding rendition of "I Know Where I've Been". "The Big Doll House", gave the swinging tap women a chance to be 'the baddies behind bars' and the Matron Jailer (Lesley Johnson) an hilarious opportunity to show off her snazzy moves. Fabulous! Edna and Wilbur (Steve Law) both excellently cast, within their quirky and loveable characters delivered one of the most engaging numbers in the show. "Timeless To Me" was a total crowd pleaser. It was sung and danced with warm emotion and exuded evident comedic pleasure from both performers. "Without Love" was also a heartfelt quartet from the young couples, Tracy, Link, Penny & Seaweed. As the excitement of this feel good musical built to a happy conclusion, the buzz on stage was truly electric. Tracy and Link, Penny and Seaweed pulled out all the stops and led an amazing introduction to "You Can't Stop The Beat" finale. Showing amazing energy, the reprise included the reveal of a fabulous, glamorous and voluptuous Edna, which all added to the spectacle in more ways than one. It was a joy to see the pure pleasure and excitement from every performer as they revelled in their well deserved final applause. There were evidently many new young members in the company this year who added greatly to this production, playing many of the small cameo roles. Well done, everyone! It's to be hoped that the experience and excitement of *Hairspray* will encourage their enthusiasm to continue.

Note to Committees:

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

Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society: Sister Act

Director: Brian McGlasson; Musical Director: Jenny Campbell; Choreographer: Anne Anderson

Once again, a high energy and super slick production has left IDAOS with so much to celebrate. The fabulous well balanced band complemented every number and never overpowered. Quick and effective scene changes with a good lighting plot are to be commended too. Well rehearsed choreography of so many nuns, as well as for the smaller numbers, was made to look effortless for all involved. Star quality oozed from a superbly cast company. Leading the show from the glittering start to the glittering finale was the larger than life character Deloris (Nicola Watt). She lived every ounce of this role and truly made it her own. As a strong actress and singer this massive role, with lots of vocal challenges, was handled with ease, as she created and was part of some of the show's highlights. She shone from "Take Me To Heaven", opening with Tina (Rosie Graham) and Michelle (Ellie Hope), through the hit numbers, "Here Within These Walls" and "Raise Your Voice", with the amazing harmonic support of the nuns' chorus. By the interval the singing had certainly raised the roof. In Act II her "Bless Our Show" and the touching reprise of "Sister Act", could be referred to as "Fabulous Baby!" Great credit must also go to one of IDAOS's stalwarts and ex-leading ladies, who was tempted back to glow again in the role of Mother Superior (Pam Graham). Her natural acting ability and experienced singing made her the perfect character to hold the reigns in "Here Within These Walls", which is a superb number including Deloris and the nuns. Her well delivered and superbly heartfelt, "I Haven't Got A Prayer" was excellent and earned her worthy audience applause. Within the bevy of excited and excitable nuns, who were all exceptional in their choral numbers, were some absolute cameo gems. Sister Mary Robert (Lizzie Bell) with true star quality wowed us with a stunning, "The Life I Never Led". She also took a lead, including comical Sister Mary Lazarus (Karen Wilson), during the hilarious and upbeat take on the Noviciate in "It's Good To Be A Nun". Superb! Sisters Mary Patrick (Claire Bell), Mary Theresa (Shirley Bean) and Mary Martin-of-Tours (Leanne Young) were a true constant within the motivational leadership and choral strength of the inspired sisterhood. Not to be outdone by the superb female cast this year was a highly capable male presence. Curtis (David Paterson) gave a very strong performance as Deloris's overpowering, crooked, bully of a boyfriend. Playing a strong character role, he superbly led his three side-kicks during their smooth, Motown-like moves, in the 'boy band' type number, "When I Find My Baby". TJ (Stewart Wilson), Joey (Roger Brydon) and Pablo (Colin Tweedie) were excellently cast as Curtis's stooges. With superb use of the floor and great harmonic vocals, the three amigos had the audience in stitches at their suggestive "Lady In The Long Black Dress". The dependable role of 'sweaty' Eddie (Douglas Russell) met all the character requirements and he certainly had his wonderful moment of glory as he strutted his stuff with the down and outs, producing three slick changes and a great rendition of "I Could Be That Guy". Monsignor O'Hara (Jamie McCubbin) gave a very solid performance. Initially, the bearer of bad news, his upbeat turnaround of support came with his spiritual belief in saving Queen of Angels through the music of Deloris's inspired choir. Hallelujah! In the words of the Queen of Angels nuns, the whole company should 'rejoice' and 'celebrate' a hugely successful production.

KAOS Musical Theatre Company: Oliver!

Director: Euan McIver; Musical Director: Mike Hardy; Choreographer: Avril Aitken

What a superb show! It's hard to know where to start with this report. It was such a fabulous night's entertainment. In the hands of a new directing trio this year this wonderful vision of *Oliver!* came to star studded fruition. The set design was so clever and superbly built and painted to clearly represent each scene, with crew showing skill in their flawless changes. From the workhouse, streets of London, Fagin's lair, and numerous other interwoven entries and exits dressing the scenes, it all assisted in the evident fluidity of the show. The orchestra was excellent, the lighting atmospheric and the choreography superb. The costume plot was supplied entirely by the Company's own wardrobe, Upper Circle, who have a massive collection of costumes and who also hire out. Top marks! The show opening was very atmospheric, with the slow promenade of Oliver's mother arriving at the workhouse before the iconic vision of the children in the workhouse. A strong group of children looking for "Food, Glorious Food" got the drama well and truly off to a good start. The Mr Bumble (Alan Thomson) and Widow Corney (Pooee Pitman) duo were an inspired pairing. Superb interaction and hilarious facial expressions made them the first comic pair to captivate the audience with a perfectly interpreted, "I Shall Scream". Through another slick scene change, the Bumble promenade in "Boy For Sale" arrived perfectly at the Sowerberry residence. Another fabulous pairing, Mr Sowerberry (Ian Fairnington) and Mrs Sowerberry (Tamsin Reinsch), delivered one of my morbidly favourite numbers with aplomb, "That's My Funeral". It was an absolute treat to hear such a beautiful pure young voice delivering a very touching "Where is Love?" The interpretation and phrasing were excellent. Oliver (Alfred Gracie), on the evening that I was there, played a superb role, full of character and spirit. On the alternate night I was led to believe that Henry Aitchison was equally good. Oliver's dramatic escape from the clutches of the Sowerberrys featured two very capable young actors, Noah (Will Robbins) and Charlotte (Tegan Taylor) who appeared very comfortable in their roles. Our introduction to The Artful Dodger (Lara Reader) involved an energetic group of youngsters and chorus support for a fabulous "Consider Yourself". A natural performer with cockney accent and dance ability saw the role of Dodger totally inhabited by this youngster. The alternate evening was equally well played by Findlay Kohler. As the scene morphed into Fagin's lair the introduction to the crooked old thief, Fagin (Rich Millan), produced one of the most engaging numbers, as the boys had total fun on stage. The superbly choreographed

pickpocketing game won huge credit during the number "Pick A Pocket Or Two". Our introduction to Nancy (Dawn Hunter) and Bet (Aimee Ferguson) won the audience's hearts in two of the most popular numbers "Fine Life" and "I'd Do Anything", including the boys in Fagin's lair. Act I closes to an uplifting "Be Back Soon" as Fagin waves his protégés away on their next public picking. Act II opened to a fantastic, animated rendition of "Oom Pah Pah", starring Nancy and the chorus of The Three Cripples. Bill Sykes (Steven Luke) made his mark as he terrorised the on-stage company in his excellent, scary delivery of "My Name". His overall portrayal of the murderous bully was without doubt perfectly executed. The iconic number "As Long As He Needs Me" saw the leading lady portray the vulnerable part of her character, earning huge applause. If I had to make one tiny criticism, it would only be that I have never seen Nancy played with such bright, white tipped, beautiful French manicured nails! The "Who Will Buy?" sequence was gorgeous. The street traders were superb in their response to Oliver's solo as he observed through his upstairs window. They celebrated their wonderful feelings in the song and the scene expanded into a beautiful array of characters in the street. In a precursor to the final scenes I have to give huge recognition to Fagin for his absolutely outstanding highlight while "Reviewing The Situation" – a superbly animated and atmospheric rendition, with the most perfect diction I've ever encountered from Fagin. The solo violinist added to this wonderful highlight. Huge congratulations on this excellent production.

Selkirk Musical Theatre Company: Made In Dagenham

Director & Musical Director: Derek Calder; Choreographer: Stuart Mitchell

My only previous experience of this show was the highly successful production by Falkirk AOS last year. As a past member of Selkirk, and having many dear friends involved in the company, I could honestly say I was really excited to see them perform this show. I was over the moon to see how well the pared back, simple set with projection effects really suited the show and the slick stage management was testament to the directorial decision. Top marks! The band was excellent, though occasionally in this echoing hall, it slightly over powered the lyrics, but that was ironed out half way through the "Busy Women" number with such a strong group of women, moving effortlessly and harmonically, inhabiting their larger than life roles to have a dig at the men. As the brick front cloth drew to introduce the strong male presence, they also proved that they could be a challenging force, delivering a harmonic, strong "Made in Dagenham" allowing the girls to set up the machine floor for a slick reveal. The essence of the characters, Rita (Kirsty Cleland), Clare (Amanda Blacklock), Sandra (Ellen McFadzen), Beryl (Tracy Borthwick) and Cass (Ellen Halliday), were perfectly captured. Each character, obviously chosen for their vocal strength and acting prowess, embraced the story's human challenge that made them all so wonderfully unique. Dialect appeared effortless and interpretation of the script was superb. Rita was outstanding as she grew stronger within her character to become the leader to champion the movement for women's equal pay. She inhabited the role and delivered show-stopping numbers, "Everybody Out" and "Stand Up", with utter conviction. A round of applause is also due in recognition of her actual character for educating all young women through this musical theatre platform. Her relationship with loveable Eddie (Stuart Mitchell) was an inevitable roller coaster of emotions, played out sympathetically by both. Eddie's stage presence and vocal range proved he was perfectly suited to the role, brilliantly delivering two contrasting numbers, "I'm Sorry, I Love You" and the tearful, heart-wrenching "The Letter". The gritty, crude and rude Beryl, shone in her excellent, earthy portrayal and the delivery of her well timed lines. A fearless woman who would never be afraid to challenge, swear and push the boundaries to express "This Is What We Want". The muddled, dippy, larger than life, "Wosname" Clare, after a long freeze frame at her machine, giving the men their scene to talk shop, proved that she had focus, vocal strength, as well as a lovable character. The Labour Prime Minister of the time, Harold Wilson (Robin Murray) was highly caricatured in this production, which is written to unsympathetically portray the real man. His very able and organised Cabinet Minister, Barbara Castle (Rachel Inglis) epitomised the good, fair politician while reprising, the fabulous, "Busy Woman". Her inspiring rendition of "Ideal World" was superbly sung, a first class portrayal throughout. The doomed Connie recollected a very sentimental, "Same Old Story". Gone before her time, she leaves a lost soul in Monty. The husband and wife, Mr Hopkins (Jodie Millar) and Lisa Hopkins (Yvonne Mitchell) were excellently cast and both proved to be very strong characters. Lisa's supportive and inspirational encouragement for the striking women gave this excellent actress an opportunity to really shine in the role. The Act II opening was impressively staged to showcase all that is great In America. Mr Tooley (Craig Douglas) truly made his mark in a very strong delivery of "This Is America". In excellent voice he introduced all the American iconic images to the stage from The Statue of Liberty, the stars and stripes, Elvis, Marilyn Monroe and many more. Very impressive! Equally so, was the fabulous "Storm Clouds" scene culminating in the exhilarating, dramatic, spine-chilling statement, "Don't Let the B.....s Grind you Down!" There were some gifted cameo roles who made their mark on the night. Barry & Gregory Hubble were expertly played by Ross Aitkin. Cortina man (Kyle Fairbairn) led a lively scene and the O'Grady youngsters (Callum Crooks and Lucymarie MacEvoy), who played on the night, were excellent. This was an emotionally charged and well dramatised piece of musical theatre by Selkirk MTC which everyone should be very proud of. Congratulations!

NODA SCOTLAND MAGAZINE

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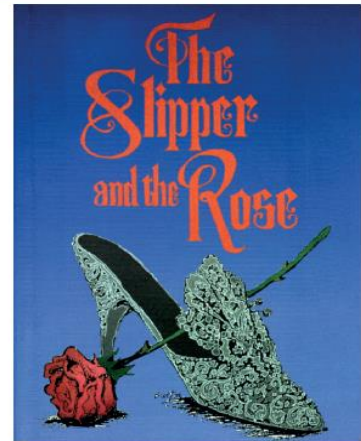
Many once popular musicals are losing their natural audiences. Here are some interesting alternatives...



Based on the true story of what happened (with a bit of artistic licence) when a ship containing 50,000 cases of whisky runs aground on a remote Scottish island in 1943. This musical delights and amuses audiences whenever it is staged.



Two collectors converge on a Highland distillery to compete for the last remaining bottle of the fabled Glenigma malt. The stakes are high, but is this a battle for a bottle, or will the Scottish experience change everyone's lives forever?



The libretto for this glorious musical tale of Cinderella and her Prince has recently been updated and revised to make it more easily staged. Taken from the smash hit film of 1976 with music and lyrics by the Sherman Brothers ('Mary Poppins' and 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang') it is a truly family friendly piece.



A comedic drama musical with contemporary upbeat songs and dance. In a British 'Fame' school two student girls grapple with their abilities, self-confidence and fears then compete to see who will go on to represent their academy at an audition for a West End musical.



Students at Grangebourne School celebrate their last day, then move on in life with unrequited love, recollection and reminiscence, betrayal and forgiveness, as they are re-united through a tragedy over 20 years later, together with a reunion of another sort entirely.

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Hoovering on The Edge a full length drama by Hilary Spiers (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.



Past Forward a full length drama by Carolyn Pertwee (2m, 2f) Can the past ever let us go? Liz and Tom Fielding are poised to change their present life by selling up and moving to the coast for a brave new future, little knowing that a chance meeting with Sam Rutland, a long lost friend from their youthful past, will challenge the very foundations of their lives. What happened all those years ago when Sam shared their flat in those heady carefree days? Why is Liz so desperate to keep Sam and their daughter apart, and then so anxious when they not only meet at the family home, but become lovers?

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CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

Inverness Musical Theatre

2020 will see the 95th anniversary of Inverness Musical Theatre, which was previously called Inverness Opera Company. They are currently planning a show to celebrate this milestone as well as a number of events to commemorate a landmark in the history of amateur theatre in Inverness.

At a dinner dance and awards ceremony following their recent production of *Footloose – the Musical* at the Eden Court Theatre, presentations were made to members of the company: (L to R) Backstage Award - Margaret Burgess Aburn; Diva Award - Darren McMillan; Devine Award for Personality of the Year - Sophie Marr; Best Newcomer Award - Alan Banner; and Director’s Award - Morven Reid.

In addition, the company recognised 266 years of dedicated service to amateur theatre and NODA Scotland Councillor Stuart McCue-Dick was delighted to be asked to present these awards to the following members: (L to R) Carol Robertson (27 years), Louise Munro (61 years), Maureen Pringle (59 years), Stella Reynolds (42 years) and George Reynolds (45 years). George also received a NODA Recognition of Commitment certificate for his service to Inverness Musical Theatre in respect of all his hard work and dedication to backstage.



Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre: Narnia the Musical

Director: Shirley McGill; Musical Director: Jenny Cranna; Choreographer: Fiona Beedie

This musical retelling of the CS Lewis classic children’s story *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* was a perfect vehicle to display the acting and musical talents of the young people taking part. The four Pevensie children at the heart of the story – Peter (Thomas McIntosh), Susan (Maia Reed), Lucy (Sarah Smith), Edmund (Angus Freeman) – all gave very strong performances, but particularly Lucy and Edmund in the portrayal of their sibling love/hate relationship. Sean Farmerey, in the joint roles of the children’s Uncle Professor Digory Kirke and Aslan the Great Lion, true Ruler of Narnia, gave an excellent performance. He brought out equally the compassionate and powerful aspects of Aslan’s character in both his acting and singing. Ciara Hendry’s abrupt housekeeper Mrs Macready set up her transformation to the icy-cold White Witch beautifully. In the latter role she played the evilness of the character so well that you almost wanted to boo her at the walk down! Stealing every scene they appeared in were Niro Paulino and Anna Seaman as the bustling Mr & Mrs Beaver – their bickering eliciting much laughter from the audience. Strong support was given by Anna Thompson (Mr Tumnus), Ellie Robertson (a graceful White Stag), Georgia Craik (Dwarf the White Witch’s aide) and of course Father Christmas. The large ensemble of woodland creatures moved and sang well. Some of the score was not easy and I was particularly impressed by the a capella section in Act II. The costuming of the ensemble was simple but gave enough so that each character was identifiable. Good use was made of the multi-level set designed by Susan Begg and by the use of atmospheric lighting the changes between the locations and seasons were well represented. Congratulation to all involved for an excellent show.

Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre: A Tale of Two Cities

Director: Shirley McGill; Musical Directors: Kenny Hossick, Ben Torrie; Choreographer: Mhorag Anderson

This musical with book, music and lyrics by Jill Santoriello, based on Charles Dickens’ novel of the same name, is a strong piece of theatre set in Paris and London at the time of the French Revolution. Joshua Milne was outstanding as the self-loathing, drunken London lawyer Sydney Carton who eventually makes the ultimate sacrifice to save the lives of his friends the Darnay family. He had a wonderfully powerful and yet expressive singing voice as demonstrated in his

numbers “Reflection” and “The Letter”. Murray Hossick as Charles Darnay, the exiled French aristocrat befriended by Carton, was another who gave a very strong performance as a man torn between the love of his family and trying to do his best to right the wrongs done to his fellow countrymen. His trio with Carton and his young daughter Lucie “Let Her Be A Child” sung while he awaits his death was particularly poignant. Stephanie Walker as Lucie Manette, Darnay’s wife, had good stage presence and a beautiful soprano voice shown to its best in her rendition of “Without A Word” and in her duet with Darnay “Now At Last”. Strong performances too were given by the actors playing the revolutionaries Ernest and Therese Defarge, Bradley Phillips and Katie Hindle respectively. Their contributions to the numbers “Everything Stays The Same” and “The Tale” were particularly memorable. The story was not all doom and gloom with lighter moments being supplied by the two petty criminal characters of Jerry Cruncher (Callum Mooney) and John Barsad (Sean Farmerey) and by Eilidh Bisset’s Miss Pross, the Darnays’ governess. Strong support was given by Alastair Eddie (Dr Manette), Kaleb Connell (Mr Jarvis Lorry), Ben Campbell (Gaspard), Iris McComiskie (Little Lucie) and Angus Hogg (Marquis St Evremonde/Stryver). The ensemble singing and movement were of the extremely high standard we have come to expect from this group. The 10 piece orchestra, under the baton of Kenny Hossick, provided a warm-toned and supportive backing for the singers. Costuming was appropriate to the period and characters. Good use was made of the simple, but striking, multi-level set (designed and constructed by Susan Ball) in tones of earthy reds and browns reflecting the architecture of period. Congratulations to everyone involved in this superb production – the opening night standing ovation was richly deserved.

Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre (Intermediates): Sister Act

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

From the first brassy notes of the opening number we knew we were in for an upbeat evening – both in terms of the music and dancing and storyline – from this group of talented young people. McKenzie Tocher as aspirational nightclub singer Deloris Van Cartier gave a tour-de-force performance. Her strong voice was equally at home in the upbeat numbers such as “Take Me To Heaven” and in the more reflective numbers such as “Sister Act”. She portrayed the transition from bold, brash selfishness to confident, caring sisterliness well. In contrast was Jennifer McClung’s calm and dignified Mother Superior equally at home delivering sage advice or a witty put-down. Her beautiful soprano voice was shown to its best in her solos, “Here Within These Walls” and the comedic “I Haven’t Got A Prayer”. Beth Nicolson was outstanding as the young postulant Sister Mary Robert. Her petite stature gave no indication of the powerful voice hidden within – her rendition of “The Life I Never Led” was exceptional. Samuel Anderson as Detective Eddie Souther, Deloris’s long-time admirer, gave a very strong performance with an excellent rendition of “I Could Be That Guy”. Strong performances too were given by Andrew Robertson as gangster Curtis and his side-kicks TJ (Alex Andrews), Joey (Max Hunter) and Pablo (Joel Anderson); their antics in the “Lady In The Long Black Dress” added greatly to the comedy in the show. Strong support was given by Lara Morris (Sister Mary Patrick), Elspeth McPherson (Sister Mary Lazarus) and Rowan Campbell (Monsignor O’Hara). Good use was made of the multi-level set, designed by Susan Ball, especially in the ensemble numbers when the large chorus of nuns made a heavenly sound (well at least after Deloris had taken them in hand) and raised the roof in the rousing Act I finale “Take Me To Heaven” and the closing number “Spread The Love Around”. Choreography, especially in the big ensemble numbers, was impressive. Congratulations for a fun and uplifting evening’s entertainment – the standing ovation was well deserved.

Aurora Productions: Hairspray

Director & Choreographer: Hannah McGinlay; Musical Director: Hugh Johnstone; Choreographer: Carrie Simpson

On a bright rainbow coloured set, complete with bold geometric shapes, the company instantly took those of us of a certain age back to the 1960s. The production fizzed with energy from the opening “Good Morning Baltimore” to the closing “You Can’t Stop The Beat”. Sophie McCann was outstanding as teenager Tracy Turnblad willing to stand up to segregation on her way to reach her dreams. She had excellent singing, dancing and acting skills. Lewis Moggach, as her mother Edna, too gave an excellent performance, beautifully portraying the change from frumpy housewife to bold entrepreneur. I particularly liked the duet “You’re Timeless To Me” with her husband Wilbur, played by the ever-resourceful Ewan Campbell, filled equally with laughter and pathos. Playing the baddie is always fun and Mallory Peter, as the pushy producer and stage mother Velma Von Tussle, took full advantage of this, delivering sarcastic comments and put-downs with gusto, as did Eilidh Henderson as her ambitious daughter Amber. June Cranna, as soul mother Motormouth Maybelle, gave a very strong performance, delivering good advice to the revolutionary youngsters. Her delivery of “I Know Where I’ve Been” was particularly moving. Aicha Sutcliffe, as her dance loving son Seaweed J Stubbs, was another youngster who gave such a strong performance it took some time to realise this male role was being played by a girl. The growing love between Sea J and Tracy’s shy pigtail twisting friend Penny Lou Pingleton, played beautifully by Andrea Thomson, was sensitively portrayed. Brodie Murray, as Tracy’s love interest Link Larkin, looked every inch the teen idol in this his first stage role. Strong support was given by Colin Black as the vibrant TV show host Corny Collins and by Claire Hellings as Penny’s controlling mother Prudy Pingleton. Special mention must be made of young Lily Chaplin as Little Inez – one to look out for in the future! The ensemble singing and dancing were of an extremely high standard and were expertly backed by Hugh Johnstone and his 13 piece orchestra. Congratulations to all for an excellent, fun-filled evening.

Easter Ross Musical Theatre: The Addams Family

Director: Barbara More; Musical Director: Sharon Macleod; Choreographer: Kerry Russell

With a change of name (previously The Garrick Singers) comes a change in direction for this company – from more traditional musicals to more modern ones. The show includes all the well-loved characters from the TV series along with the introduction of the “normal” Beineke family. This was a perfect choice for this company, allowing it to showcase both its musical and comedy strengths. Iain McKenzie was superb as Gomez the patriarch of the family with his rich voice shown to its best in numbers such as “What If” and “Happy/Sad”. His facial expressions as he was torn between loyalty to his wife and the love for his daughter were priceless. Equally superb was Kirsty Gordon as the matriarch Morticia, elegant and sexy in her black dresses. Her delivery of one-line putdowns to the various members of her family were hilarious. Rosanna Burton, playing their feisty daughter Wednesday, had a good singing voice and good strong stage presence and worked well with Shaun Cowan as Lucas Beineke, her “normal” boyfriend, who also gave a strong performance. Much of the laughter in the piece was engendered by Uncle Fester, played by Andy Hurst, in his attempts to woo the Moon and by Pugsley, played by the excellent Abbie McGoran, in his attempts to thwart his sister’s romance. Derek Brown and Kerry Russell, as Lucas’s parents Mal and Alice, also brought about much laughter – especially Alice in the number “Full Disclosure” while under the influence of a truth drink! Strong support was given by Kay Smith as Grandma and John F Kennedy as a towering Lurch. The chorus of ancestors kept to their characters and sang and moved well. Music was provided by a mixture of backing tracks and piano, in the hands of sound engineer Ruairidh Gollen and pianist Mairi Mackenzie, and worked well. The sets and costumes were all appropriate to the period and characters and good use was made of the stage to avoid any long scene changes. Well done, all at ERMT, for a most enjoyable evening.

Elgin Musical Theatre: 9 to 5 – the Musical

Director: Beryl Duncan; Musical Director: Bob Garrity; Choreographer: Sarah Blacklaw

With music and lyrics by Dolly Parton you anticipate a show full of wonderful music, humour and pathos and Beryl Duncan’s production – her first for Elgin MT – did not disappoint in any of these. The three ladies in the leading roles of Violet (Julie Gray), Judy (Janice Anderson) and Doralee (Natalie Munro) worked well together – all three having strong singing voices and good stage presence. Julie’s portrayal of Violet (the senior secretary always overlooked for promotion to a managerial post) was excellent – she brought out the character’s strong attributes but was also able to show her softer side as in the relationship with Joe (the young accountant played by Callum McKenzie) and I particularly liked their duet “Let Love Grow”. Janice’s portrayal of Judy really brought out the transformation from timid, recently divorced housewife to strong independent woman beautifully – her rendition of “Get Out and Stay Out” was outstanding. Natalie’s portrayal of the brassy, not-so-dumb blond secretary was spot on. I loved her scene with the misogynistic boss where she promised to “change him from a rooster to a hen with just one shot” and also her rendition of “Backwoods Barbie”. Ian Duncan, as said boss Franklin Hart, gave such a good strong performance that you almost wanted to cheer every time the ladies got the better of him! Susan Gillespie as Roz Keith gave an excellent performance as Hart’s lovelorn PA and her rendition of “Heart to Heart” was hilarious! Strong support was given by Chris Hewett (Dwayne), Lauren Crannis (Joss), Willie Duncan (Dick), Ken Smith (Tinsworthy) and Helen McKellar (office lush Margaret). The ensemble singing and movement were both good. The 11 piece orchestra, under the careful baton of Bob Garrity, handled the music well, supporting but never overpowering the vocalists. The use of a digital wall, designed by Callum McLeod, made sure the transformation between scenes was quick and seamless. Costuming was appropriate to the period and characters. Congratulations to everyone for a most enjoyable evening.

Florians Drama Club: Harvey

Director: Trevor Nicol

It is very appropriate that for the first production in this its 75th Anniversary year the company decided to put on the comedy *Harvey* which was written in 1944. The main theme of the play – what is / is not normal behaviour – is as relevant today as it was when it was written. On a beautiful and detailed set designed by Jon King, the story of Elwood P Dowd, his family and friends – in particular Harvey the imaginary 6 foot 1½ inch white rabbit – unfolded. Trevor Nicol’s production brought out equally the humour and pathos in the piece. Nicholas Nicol was outstanding in his portrayal of the eccentric Elwood P Dowd with expert comic timing and delivery – his performance almost had you believing in his invisible friend! Jenni Lomax as Elwood’s sister Veta Louise Simmons, determined to unburden herself of her embarrassing brother, gave a beautifully comic performance in depicting the character’s journey from scheming mother to a woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown. In her machinations she was ably assisted by her daughter Myrtle Mae Simmons – delightfully played by Sasha Devine – determined to get a husband. Her interaction with the unsuitable sanatorium attendant was hilarious. Another strong performance was given by Alan Holling as psychiatrist William R Chumley. His conversion from laid-back consultant – complete with southern drawl – to nervous wreck always looking over his shoulder added greatly to the comedy in the piece. Strong support was given by Darren MacMillan (in his first principal role) as Dr Lyman Sanderson, Aine O’Shea as his love interest Nurse Ruth Kelly, Steven Kelly as sanatorium

attendant Marvin Wilson, Trevor Nicol as lawyer Judge Omar Gaffney, Anne Bamborough as Aunt Ethel Chauvenet, Caroline Nicol as Dr Chumley's wife Betty and Jon King as taxi driver E J Lofgren. Mention too must be made of Louise Munro's scene stealing maid Miss Johnson and of course the omnipresent (but never seen) Harvey. Congratulations on another excellent production.

Haddo Children's Theatre: Dazzle

Director: Graham Wilson; Musical Directors: Rob Fryer, Toto Coxo; Choreographer: Karin Leslie

This show, written for schools and youth groups by Andrew Bailey, was the perfect vehicle for the 50 or so members of this company with good principal roles, lots of character parts and plenty for the ensemble to take part in. The story is set in the rundown fairground in Dazzle Bay and tells of the struggle by the attraction holders to save it from being sold and redeveloped. Kirsten Munro played Poppy Pringle, who has recently inherited the fairground from her late father Fred. She had a good singing voice and acted well. I particularly liked her wistful solo "I Hear You Calling Me" and her duet with her love interest Skimpy Dinoburger "Bring On The Moon And The Dancing". Skimpy was played by Ronan Malster who had a wonderfully rich voice shown to its best in his rendition of the ballad "Who Needs Sunshine?" Ryan Green played the villain of the piece (avaricious businessman Murgatroyd Megarich) almost like a pantomime villain - full of bluster and with a sneering laugh. He is won over by the love of Flossie Candour played by the delightful Emily Brown. Emily had a beautiful voice, good stage presence and danced well. Her duet with Murgatroyd, "Dizzy and Dangling", was a joy. Another strong performance was given by Sally Brebner as the evil fortune-teller Sarkky Cutter – she had a good singing voice as shown in the "Freeze The Air" number. Strong support was given by Morgan Creighton and Rachael Lawson (Murgatroyd's PA and Accountant respectively), Sandy Tateson (Fred Pringle), Ben McWilliam (Uncle Waltztein), Peter Third (strongman Monkeychunks) and Kayleigh Trotter, Brodie Creighton and Erin Murphy (the Ghost Train Spooks). Singing and movement by the ensemble was good. The fairground set, designed and built by the parent members of the group, was bright and bold. The costumes too were bright and appropriate to the characters. The six-piece band, under the control of Rob Fryer, was always supportive to the singers. Graham Wilson is to be congratulated on this his first production with the group. Well done everyone.

Inverness Musical Theatre Company: Footloose – The Musical

Director & Musical Director: Susan Munro; Choreographer: Dionne Monteiro

From the opening notes of "Footloose" to the last the energy shown by the performers had the audience screaming, clapping and stamping their feet to show their appreciation. Young Alasdair David Davidson in the lead role of rebellious Ren McCormack, despite battling glandular fever, was outstanding. His singing, whether in the upbeat numbers such as "I Can't Stand Still" or in the more reflective numbers such as "Almost Paradise", portrayed the changing moods of the character perfectly and his dancing was a joy to behold. Olivia Payne as Ariel Moore, the Reverend's daughter, was a perfect match as Ren's love interest. She portrayed beautifully the character's struggle between teenage girl on the verge of womanhood and faithful daughter. She had a good powerful voice shown to its best in the rock ballad "Holding Out For A Hero" but was able to show its softer side in the trio "Learning To Be Silent" with her and Ren's mothers. Much of the comedy in the piece was engendered by Matthias Kremer's portrayal as Ren's shy friend Willard Hewitt and by Poppy Charteris as Ariel's friend Rusty – their 'will they, won't they' romance had the audience in hoots of laughter. I particularly liked Poppy's rendition of "Let's Hear It For The Boy" and Matthias's "Mama Says". Good strong performances were given by Alan Macleod as Reverend Moore and Morna Eadie as his wife Vi. Morna's rendition of "Can You Find It In Your Heart" was particularly touching. Another strong performance was given by Lesley Mitchell as Ren's mother Ethel McCormack. Darren McMillan was very convincing as the bully-boy Chuck Cranston. Strong support was given by Caitlin Macleod (Urleen), Heather-Jane Davidson (Wendy-Jo), Carol Robertson and Alan Graham (Ren's Aunt and Uncle Lulu and Wes Warnicker), Gerry Sutton (Coach Dunbar), Fiona McDonald (Eleanor Dunbar) and Eddie Docherty (Principal Clark). Mention too must be made of Sophie Marr's cameo as the hilarious roller-skating diner owner Betty Blast and Pete Bullock Mckie's country singer Cowboy Bob. The costuming was appropriate to each character. The set was relatively simple but effective allowing for no delays between the scene changes and leaving plenty of room for the energetic and beautifully choreographed company numbers. The singing and dancing from the 48 strong company – whether principal or ensemble – was of an extremely high standard. Congratulations – the standing ovation was well deserved!

Ury Players: Dirty Dancing

Director: Fiona Westland

I could say this hilarious comedy was good clean fun but I'd be lying. It was the naughty risqué element that made it so enjoyable. When redundancy threatens, Olive, Gladys and Elsie, three cleaners of a certain age, reflect about their lives and reach the conclusion that they could all do with a bit of excitement as well as a new career opportunity. Answering a wrong number in the office they are cleaning produces an unexpected solution, giving Elsie the idea of starting a phone sex business – an unusual retirement plan. It doesn't take her long to persuade the others and soon they are

setting up “shop” in the office they are supposed to be cleaning, doing their best to avoid the suspicions of their bullying line manager, Dave. As the business flourishes, so do the humdrum lives of the three very different women and we begin to uncover their secrets, hopes and dreams. Elsie, played very naturally and with terrific comedy timing, by Lynn Zaccarini is the bubbly positive influence on the other two women. Gladys, her meek, uncertain friend, is played very expressively by Liz Forrest, while Freda Adam as Olive Grant, the widowed, strait-laced ex-Guide leader gives a consistently convincing performance. It's a delight to witness the three women's rise from adversity into the confident beings their flourishing business brings. There are many nicely directed and hilarious highlights, not least when they discover bully Dave is one of their clients. Garry Brindley brings the character of Dave to life beautifully as we discover his home life is ruled by mummy. All four actors kept the audience continually entertained. Praise to all concerned.

Gordon R. Smith

Brechin Amateur Operatic Society: Promises, Promises

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

Promises, Promises were what we were told to expect from the title of this seldom performed 1960s musical comedy and they were delivered by the bucketful by the company. Deceptively difficult music by Burt Bacharach (multiple changes of time signatures in the numbers!) and lyrics by Hal David were handled extremely well by the singers and 11-piece orchestra under the carefully controlled baton of Gordon Smith. The libretto by Neil Simon, as would be expected, was full of wit and humour and was delivered delightfully by the cast and received with much laughter from the audience. Young Ross Robertson was outstanding in the role of the ambitious junior executive Chuck Baxter. He had a good singing voice and his acting had the audience on his side from the beginning in his quest to attain a seat in the executive dining room and in attracting the attention of its attractive waitress, Fran Kubelik. Fran was played delightfully by Laura Ferguson with a good strong singing voice and an excellent stage presence. These two actors worked well together and I particularly liked their duet “I'll Never Fall In Love Again”. Married J D Sheldrake, Chuck's personnel director and rival for Fran's affections, was masterly portrayed by Graeme W Baird – one almost felt like booing him at the walk-down! Gill Smith Matheson was hilarious in the cameo role of Marge MacDougall, a tipsy lonely heart whom Chuck meets in a bar on Christmas Eve. Jim Ramsay as Dr Dreyfuss, Chuck's long suffering but helpful neighbour, gave good portrayal as an elderly GP. Strong support was given by Laura Cuthill (Miss Olsen, Sheldrake's Secretary), the Executives – Steve Middleton (Kirkeby), Keith Cuthill (Eichelberger), Alan Matheson (Dobitch), Millar Young (Vanderhof) and the Turkey Lurkey Girls – Caroline Fenwick (Miss Wong), Emma Ferguson (Miss Delahova) and Ali Niven (Miss Polanski). The choreography was carried out impeccably by the chorus and principals alike. The set made up of a back wall of light boxes, the colours of which changed to indicate the different scenes, and with the addition of small pieces of furniture and props worked well on the small stage. Costumes were appropriate to the characters and period. Congratulations to everyone for yet again a delightful evening's entertainment.

Douglas J Clark

Carnoustie Musical Society: The Best Man

Director: John White; Musical Director: Colin Grant;

Choreographers: Lynsey Ellen Faulkner, Kerry Mitchell, Laura Cameron, Kathy MacCallum, Gemma Cox

We were delighted to attend the Scottish première of this new musical written by Ian Cook and Ian Newton, set in London in 1981 on the day of the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana. In her search for “Dagenham's answer to Mr Darcy”, we witnessed the blooming of a new relationship between hairdresser Cathy Price (Kerry Mitchell) and womaniser Tony Wickham (Gary Cavanagh). Kerry played the character of innocent Cathy with great expression and vivacity and was nicely matched by Gary's convincing portrayal of “wide boy” Tony. Cathy was flattered by Tony's attentions but horrified to discover their one night of passion had resulted in her pregnancy. Oblivious to this, Tony had his own worries. In debt to a local crime boss Mr Temple (assuredly played with menace by Mark Masson) his plan to raise the money was by duping Cathy into giving him the money from her trust fund. Cathy was surprised by such an idea and forced to reveal her own news. But Tony recovered quickly from her revelation and did indeed propose as he saw an even better opportunity to turn things around. Though Cathy was caught up in the whirlwind romance, her mother, Vi performed effortlessly by Linsey McDonald, was dubious about the match while Pat Sharp (Liz Pardoe) was convincing as her supportive posh aunt. Lesley Ritchie played Cathy's outrageous and disapproving Gran with verve. Cathy's friends Sharon and Lisa, excited by the news were performed respectively and with good timing and energy by Elaine Scougal and Pamela Roach. The two pals with Gran as well as Rodger Brunton as Rev Collins provided many comedy moments. Evident throughout it all was the love that boy-next door, Danny Tilney, harboured for Cathy. Sensitive portrayed by Chris Duke, shy Danny confronts Tony about his scheme and eventually saves the day by telling Cathy the truth about her fiancé. Supporting roles were competently delivered by Dave Soutar (Ron Wickham),

Ali Laing (Charlie Thomas) and Claire Smith (Aunt Margaret) with various smaller cameo performances by members of the ensemble. Accents were consistent and convincing throughout and with some catchy songs and an enthusiastic singing and dancing chorus (though some of the lyrics weren't always easy to make out) the show had lots of comedy moments. The touching duet "When I Get Married" by Cathy and Danny was a highlight. With a simple set complemented by some nice production and a small but adequate orchestra providing the musical accompaniment, congratulations must go to the production team and all involved for providing an enjoyable and entertaining evening.

Kirriemuir Amateur Operatic Society: Into the Woods

Director & Musical Director: Tommy Baxter

This show, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, is not easy for the performers, being musically tricky with awkward rhythms and tempo changes and with lyrics that are difficult to master. It is almost operatic in nature, there being very little spoken dialogue. However, every one of the cast members rose to the challenge and presented the audience with a memorable show. In this they were well supported by the rich, full orchestra sound provided by the click track backing used. Nicole Kilcoyne was a delightfully serene Cinderella with a beautiful voice. In contrast Maddie Farquhar was a bouncy Little Red Riding Hood wending her way carelessly through the woods – her duet with the Wolf "Hello Little Girl" was a delight. Logan Stewart's hapless Jack had everyone on his side from his first appearance with Milky-White the cow and due to the scoldings he received from his mother, strongly played by Pauline Cawdery. Neil Stewart and Helen Shearer as the Baker and his Wife made a very believable pairing with all their bickering, and I particularly liked their duet "It Takes Two". I also liked Neil's duet with the Mysterious Man (Rob Hardman) in the reflective "No More". Donna Douglas was excellent as the Witch – the transformation from old hag to beautiful young woman was well handled. Her singing voice was shown to its best in her "Lament" and in the duets with Rapunzel. Rapunzel was played by Jennifer Bruce, again with a beautiful singing voice, and she proved she had a good pair of lungs on her in her episodes of wailing in the second act! Dylan McKay played the dual roles of Wolf/Cinderella's Prince with plenty of swagger and machismo (eliciting a few sighs from the ladies in the audience). In the swagger stakes he was equally matched by Stewart Rooney as Rapunzel's Prince and their duet "Agony" was a hoot. Much of the comedy in the piece was supplied by the antics of Cinderella's family – Paula Milne (sexy Stepmother), Jennifer Devaney and Fiona Retalic (Stepsisters Florinda and Lucinda) and ineffectual Father (Derrick Shearer). Strong support was given by Jim Walker (Narrator), Aileen Fairweather (Cinderella's Mother), Valerie Anderson (Granny) and James Dobbie (Steward). Good use was made of the foliage - bedecked multi-level set, complete with horseshoe gallery, ensuring the full height of the stage was utilised. Costuming was appropriate to the characters. Well done, all at Kirriemuir AOS for an excellent evening's entertainment!

Douglas J Clark

Dumfries Musical Theatre Company: The Sound of Music

Director: Stewart Cameron; Musical Director: Christopher Watt; Choreographer: Amy McCreadie

This iconic musical was an exciting choice for DMTC. The show was perfectly suited to the larger theatre and was well set to produce the images of this Tyrolean classic with quick, slick scene changes to assist the flow of the production. The small band was excellent and totally adequate to complement all the vocal performers. Although this is not a big dancing show the choreographed movement appeared effortless for the youngsters and adults involved. The Nonnberg Abbey nuns' chorus was a harmonic delight to precede the introductory scene which features the endearing solo by Maria (Erin Craighead). Her day in the hills echoed to the delightful "Sound Of Music". Obviously a strong character actress with excellent singing ability to match, this young lady lived and breathed the role of Maria from start to finish. Her interaction with the children was warm and captivating, which no doubt made her the ideal choice to play the loveable von Trapp governess. Captain von Trapp (Ron Stairmand) portrayed the role of the naval captain with great strength. His interpretation of the character was excellent from the stern persona on introduction to the lighter, warmer character who falls in love with Maria. The von Trapp children were an absolute treat, all showing enthusiasm and massive talent. The group on the final night played their roles with total conviction and were so clearly fond of Maria. Friedrich (Callen Love), Louisa (Nadine McDonald), Kurt (Joe Clark), Brigitta (Molly McTeir), Marta (Beth Wright) and Gretl (Erin McCaughey) shared their roles with equally talented youngsters, Ruairi McCormack, Star Murdy, Donald Whilaw, Esme Robertson, Izzy Earle and Skye van der Burgh. Leisl (Anna Wilson) shone as the oldest child and led both sets of siblings for the entire run. Her "Sixteen Going On Seventeen" with Rolf (David Dalziel) was well presented and relatively relaxed for two young people getting close on stage for the first time. Well done. Our first introduction to the principal nuns during a wonderful rendition of "Maria", totally proved that Sister Berthe (Nina Rennie), Sister Sophia (Katrina Patterson), Sister Margaretta (Laura Whitelaw) and Mother Abbess (Janette Davidson) all had the vocal and dramatic expertise to carry their roles. The Mother Abbess particularly played her role to perfection and with superb vocal ability and produced a spine-tingling highlight to end Act I, "Climb Every Mountain". The characters of Elsa (Lindsay Nurney) and Max (David Ford) were in excellent hands. Elsa gave an elegant and polished performance and Max was

wonderfully light hearted and convincing in his occasional, comical lack of scruples. Their dramatic and vocal strength was evident throughout and particularly in both trios with von Trapp. The songs were well applauded by the audience, albeit they are both lesser known songs because they are not in the iconic movie. Credit must also be given to the cameo roles of Franz (Neil Webster) and Frau Schmidt (Ann Beaton). They both worked well together on stage and held the day to day workings of the von Trapp household together perfectly. Overall this was such a wonderful, feel good, perfectly cast production giving the company so much to be proud of. Thank you as always for your first class hospitality.

Deborah Lyons

The Fullarton (Castle Douglas) Ltd: The Railway Children

Directors: Allan Scott, Janet Scott

I have seen the film of this production but hadn't until now seen the play. I liked the set very much with the use of a fixed framework used for a variety of scenes. Changes were made by the addition or removal of simple hand props by the performers, and the mood changes by shift in lighting and sound effects. The play starts with the three children (or so we think) who are involved in the story as it unfolds. It is not till near the end that we discover it is their reminiscences we are hearing. These three characters superbly played by Megan McCleary as Bobbie, Rebecca Potts as Phyllis, and Gavin Millar as Peter, have a huge slice of the action as they are nearly on stage for the whole show. I cannot praise them highly enough. Their interactions with each other and with the other characters was slick and the whole effect was enthralling. Jason Reekie as Father and the Doctor was his usual efficient self. He is an excellent actor with good stage presence and along with Joyce Reekie as Mother they were a convincing couple. Joyce held the stage when she was on and her switch of emotions during the fall from grace when her husband 'goes away' just goes to show what a good actress she is. Mr Perks (Brian McArthur), the station master who befriends the children, and his wife Mrs Perks played by Eden Brown made us believe their own family story and the young children Gabby McArthur, Erin Boardman and Logan Blackburn were excellent and became the young Railway Children at the end. We never know the surname of the children. Jim Gordon who played the Old Gentleman carried off his part with aplomb. Liz Black as the Cook and Mrs Viney was confident in her part/s as was William Byers who played the multi roles of the Butler, Szezcpany and Jim. Alison Murdoch was the Superintendent and in the many times I have seen her at The Fullarton I always enjoy her performance. I would come back to see this production again. Well done everyone involved and thank you for your hospitality at Castle Douglas.



Does your society have something exciting to tell?

We are looking for interesting articles for our November edition of NODA Today.

Does your society have an exciting story to tell?

Have you pulled a show off completely out of your comfort zone?

Do you perform in a quirky venue?

Does your society have famous alumni?

Then let us know!

We are always looking for stories for every edition of NODA Today and our online blog. If you think you have one of those stories then please get in touch.

Please submit by e-mail to the Editor by Friday 13 September 2019.

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat – A Youth Group Production

Guild of Players Dumfries
Theatre Royal, Dumfries
Wednesday 28 to Saturday 30 August 2019

Ladies Day

Comedy Girls
Gardyne Theatre, Dundee
Thursday 5 to Saturday 7 September 2019

Rent (School Edition)

Minerva Youth Theatre
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Thursday 12 to Saturday 14 September 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Hairspray

Leven Amateur Musical Association
The Centre, Leven
Thursday 12 to Saturday 14 September 2019

Sister Act

EROS Musical Society
Village Theatre, East Kilbride
Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 September 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

And Then There Were None

Monifieth Amateur Dramatics
Monifeith Theatre
Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 September 2019

Honk Jnr & My Son Pinocchio

Downfield Musical Society
Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Saturday 21 to Sunday 22 September 2019 (Matinees on Saturday & Sunday)

And Then There Were None

Monifieth Amateur Dramatics
Monifeith Theatre
Thursday 26 to Saturday 28 September 2019

The Addams Family, A New Musical

Dundee Operatic Society
Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Wednesday 2 to Saturday 5 October 2019

Return to the Forbidden Planet

Theatre Guild Glasgow
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Tuesday 8 to Saturday 12 October 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Smalltown

The Pantheon Club
Websters Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 8 to Saturday 12 October 2019

Godspell

Shotts St Patrick's Amateur Opera Group
Brian Duguid Theatre, Livingston
Tuesday 8 to Saturday 12 October 2019

Oliver!

Project Theatre
Falkirk Town Hall Theatre
Tuesday 8 to Wednesday 9 October 2019

All My Sons

Guild of Players Dumfries
Theatre Royal, Dumfries
Wednesday 9 to Saturday 12 October 2019

Jesus Christ Superstar

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

All Shook Up

Glasgow Light Opera Club
King's Theatre Glasgow
Wednesday 23 to Saturday 26 October 2019 (Matinees on Wednesday & Saturday)

Summer Holiday

Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society
Falkirk Community Theatre
Tuesday 29 October to Saturday 2 November 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Kiss Me, Kate

Our Lady's Musical Society
Motherwell Theatre
Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 November 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Legally Blonde – The Musical

Helensburgh Savoy Club
Victoria Halls, Helensburgh
Wednesday 6 to Saturday 9 November 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Hansel & Gretel

Eyemouth & District Community Youth Theatre
Eyemouth Old High School
Wednesday 6 to Saturday 9 November 2019

Made In Dagenham

The Minerva Club
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Tuesday 12 to Saturday 16 November 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

The Pantheon Club
Websters Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 12 to Saturday 16 November 2019

Titanic

Cumbernauld Musical Theatre Society
Sir John Wilson Town Hall, Airdrie
Tuesday 26 to Saturday 30 November 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Cinderella

Monifieth Amateur Dramatics
Monifeith Theatre
Thursday 28 November to Sunday 1 December 2019

Dick Whittington

Guild of Players Dumfries
Theatre Royal, Dumfries
Saturday 30 November to Saturday 14 December 2019
(Matinees on Saturday 30 November, Sunday 1 December & Saturday 7 December)

Sleeping Beauty

Runway Theatre Company
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Monday 2 to Saturday 7 December 2019 (Matinees on Thursday & Saturday)

Cinderella

Monifieth Amateur Dramatics
Monifeith Theatre
Thursday 5 to Sunday 8 December 2019

Jack and the Beanstalk

Downfield Musical Society
Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Friday 13 to Friday 20 December 2019 (Matinees on Saturday & Sunday)

The Wiz

Big Bad Wolf Children's Theatre Company
Falkirk Town Hall
Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 February 2020 (Matinee on Saturday)

The Hollow

Threepenny Theatricals
Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh
Thursday 6 to Saturday 8 February 2020 (Matinee on Saturday)

Sister Act

Minerva Youth Theatre
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Tuesday 11 to Saturday 15 February 2020 (Matinee on Saturday)

Last of the Red Hot Lovers

Guild of Players Dumfries
Theatre Royal, Dumfries
Wednesday 12 to Saturday 15 February 2020

Shrek – The Musical

Ayr Amateur Opera Company
Gaiety Theatre, Ayr
Monday 24 to Saturday 29 February 2020 (Matinee on Saturday)

9 to 5 – The Musical

Kilmarnock Amateur Operatic Society
Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock
Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 March 2020 (Matinee on Saturday)

Blithe Spirit

Guild of Players Dumfries
Theatre Royal, Dumfries
Wednesday 1 Saturday 4 April 2020

West Side Story

The Pantheon Club
King's Theatre, Glasgow
Monday 27 April to Saturday 2 May 2020

Shrek – The Musical

Downfield Musical Society
Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 May 2020



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 - ☆ Production team duties
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