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NODA SCOTLAND

Magazine

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



It may only be March but already 2019 has been a busy year for NODA Scotland.

Considerable progress has been made drawing up a factsheet on the Licensing of Children in Theatre. Thank you to those members who have provided input either to myself or Liz Daniels (Regional Rep – District 1) who is coordinating this. All being well, the work should be finished in the next couple of months. It is planned to include this as a topic in forthcoming Business of Amateur Theatre workshops.

Several District meetings have been held, including the first in District 1 for a considerable number of years. These meetings provide an ideal opportunity to hear about all that is going on both locally and nationally within NODA as well as meeting up and networking with other member clubs from the District. Details of future meetings are published on the NODA website and I would encourage every club to send at least one representative to each meeting - <https://www.noda.org.uk/regions/scotland/events>

A number of the NODA Scotland Committee have attended the NODA volunteer conference at Warwick University. This was an opportunity for committee members from all over the UK to come together to share ideas as well as hear from NODA about the help and support we can offer member clubs.

A number of entries have already been received for this year's Programme and Poster competition but more are always welcome. The closing date for entries is 30 June 2019. Details about the criteria and how to enter can be found on the NODA website - <https://www.noda.org.uk/regions/scotland/noda-programme-poster-competition>

Plans for this year's NODA Scotland Conference, 25-27 October at Peebles Hydro, are now beginning to take shape. As always there will be the usual mix of business and pleasure. The savings club for those who would like to help spread the cost of the weekend is now up and running. For full details please contact me. The weekend is a great way to find out about all that NODA Scotland is doing to help support amateur theatre as well as networking with members from all over the country. Please get the date in your diary and spread the word to those who have perhaps not attended previously. Full details will be released in early April but as previously announced there will be no increase in prices this year.

It's a busy time for shows over the coming months and I send best wishes to all clubs with upcoming productions. Thank you for the numerous invites Robbie and I have received – it is very much appreciated. Don't forget to list your show on the NODA website to gain additional free publicity and to be included in the weekly Facebook break a leg message.

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 July edition of the *NODA Scotland Magazine* should be with the Editor not later than **Sunday 30 June 2019**. Earlier receipt of material will be welcome.

NODA SCOTLAND COMMITTEE

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

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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 August 2019 edition are welcomed from societies and individual members and should be submitted by e-mail to the Editor by **Friday 7 June 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.

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).**



70 Year Pin

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society

Margaret Mentiplay

60 Year Diamond Bar

Markinch Amateur Operatic Society

Ian Thomson

55 Year Pin

Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company

Alison Seeley

Paisley Musical & Operatic Society

Elizabeth Brown

50 Year Medal

Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company

Mary Blacklock

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society

Robin Ozog

Monklands Light Opera

Heather Stevens

50 Year Gold Bar

Selkirk Musical Theatre Company

Graham Coulson

45 Year Silver Bar

Downfield Musical Society

Gordon Hogg

Opus Theatre Club

Gordon Smith

Paisley Musical & Operatic Society

Elizabeth McPherson

40 Year Silver Bar

Carnoustie Musical Society

Brian Boyd

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

Valerie Little

Markinch Amateur Operatic Society

Valerie Thomson

Markinch Amateur Operatic Society

Janice Wilkie

Paisley Musical & Operatic Society

Patricia Robertson

40 Year Badge

Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company

Marie Ann McSherry

35 Year Silver Bar

Elgin Musical Theatre

Ian Duncan

Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions

Fiona Margaret Scott

Selkirk Musical Theatre Company

Karen D'A Grosa

35 Year Badge

Bohemians Lyric Opera Company

Alison McKay

Callander Amateur Operatic Society

Helen Miller

Monklands Light Opera

Alan Leslie

30 Year Silver Bar

Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society

Lorraine Kemp

Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company

Craig McCredie

Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company

Caroline Wilkinson

Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group

Barbara Churcher

Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions

Carol Fraser

The Minerva Club

Colette Dunsmore

30 Year Badge

Callander Amateur Operatic Society

Elizabeth Tarrant

Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company

Helen Hoggan

25 Year Long Service Medal

Downfield Musical Society

Jen Shearer

25 Year Long Service Medal

Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society	Yvonne Dickson
Markinch Amateur Operatic Society	Julie Stirling
Opus Theatre Club	Liz Smith
St Paul's Church Dramatic Society	Leah Smith
St Paul's Church Dramatic Society	Wendy Young

25 Year Badge

Markinch Amateur Operatic Society	Glen McGill
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20 Year Badge

Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group	Mhairi Heron
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Eric Brown
Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions	Graeme Scott
Theatre Guild Glasgow	Louise Munro

15 Year Badge

Brechin Amateur Operatic Society	Geo Doig
Elgin Musical Theatre	Susan Gillespie
Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society	Karen Chambers
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society	Lynsey Cullen
Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association	Keith Breasley
Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association	Craig Spence
Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association	Dorothy Woolley
Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company	Rosemarie Jane Watt
KAOS Musical Theatre Company	Avril Aitken
KAOS Musical Theatre Company	Ian Fairnington
KAOS Musical Theatre Company	Dawn Hunter
Markinch Amateur Operatic Society	Jan Tadrowski
Paisley Musical & Operatic Society	Gillian Gray
Paisley Musical & Operatic Society	Lorna Williams
Selkirk Musical Theatre Company	Natalie Wright
Theatre Guild Glasgow	John Woods

10 Year Badge

Bohemians Lyric Opera Company	Stephanie Knowles
Bohemians Lyric Opera Company	Greg Lamb
Bohemians Lyric Opera Company	Dominic Lewis
Bohemians Lyric Opera Company	Shona Christine Sandison
Bohemians Lyric Opera Company	Katy Williamson
Brechin Amateur Operatic Society	Alan Matheson
Brechin Amateur Operatic Society	Ross Robertson
Callander Amateur Operatic Society	Mhairi Stewart
Combined Productions	Kay Robertson
Dunfermline Gilbert & Sullivan Society	Sharon Edgar
Elgin Musical Theatre	Audrey McWilliam
Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society	Michael Coyne
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society	Jan Baird
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society	Clark Eaton Turner

10 Year Badge

Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association
 Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association
 Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company
 KAOS Musical Theatre Company
 KAOS Musical Theatre Company
 KAOS Musical Theatre Company
 KAOS Musical Theatre Company
 KAOS Musical Theatre Company
 KAOS Musical Theatre Company
 Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society
 Monklands Light Opera
 Paisley Musical & Operatic Society
 Selkirk Musical Theatre Company

Maureen Harley
 Robert Sinclair
 Clare Oliver
 Nicola Horlock
 Jude Oldham
 Simon Oldham
 Poeee Pitman
 Murray Potts
 Neil Thomson
 Louise Gibson
 Nicola Frew
 Fiona Jones
 William Rooney

Commendation Award

Markinch Amateur Operatic Society

Valda Wicks

Youth Award

Minerva Youth Theatre
 Minerva Youth Theatre

Lewis Kerr
 Hannah Stewart

Youth Certificate

Big Bad Wolf Children's Theatre Company
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Amy Allan
 Calum Allan
 Robbie Allan
 Nadine Anderson
 Daisy Campbell
 Orla Cannon
 Jenna Hamilton
 Alice Haughton
 Natalie Johnstone
 Abi Kelly
 Paul MacDonald
 Erin MacInnes
 Grace McBride
 Lily McGuire
 Lucy McNaughton
 Taylor Milne
 Caitlin Peattie-Hume
 Kara Russell
 Alessandro Sportelli
 Bethany Spowart
 Katy Walsh
 Amy Adamson
 Hollie Brown
 Isla Cadman
 Taylor Fleming

Youth Certificate

Children's Theatre Bo'ness Society
Children's Theatre Bo'ness Society
Children's Theatre Bo'ness Society
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Hannah Kritzinger
Morven Nash
Andrea Robertson
Cody Rushford
Isla Sinclair
Anna Bergen
Chloe Cumming
Kirsty Denoon
Anna Gerlings
Douglas Johnston
Dasha Keith
Grace Kelly
Alannah MacLennan
Becca Matheson
Alix Morland
Leah Murray
Ross Robertson
Becky Sherrit
Millar Young

NODA TODAY



Does your society have something exciting to tell?

We are looking for interesting articles for our August 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.

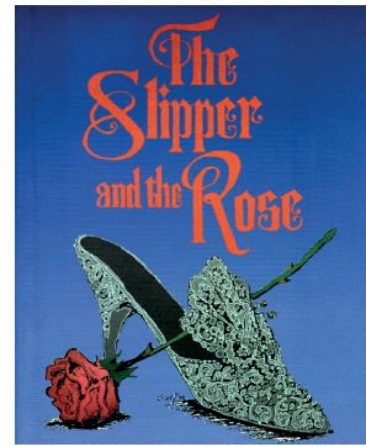
Many once popular musicals are losing their natural audiences. Here are some interesting alternatives...



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.

One Act Plays

We have a large catalogue of comedies and dramas, quite a number of which have either won, or have been runner-up, at One Act Festivals in the UK, Ireland, and around the world.



And for the dramatically-minded our full length plays are top notch...



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?

Stage scripts www.stagescripts.com sales@stagescripts.com 0345 686 0611



NODA Theatre Summer School

What courses are available?

- Back to Basics – Dance (Musical Theatre/Dance)
- Back to Basics – Singing (Musical Theatre/Singing)
- Directing Musical Theatre (Musical Theatre)
- Eat your Heart Out Agatha Christie (Multidisciplinary)
- Epic Theatre (Drama)
- First Rate Revues (Musical Theatre)
- Set Building and Prop Making (Technical)
- Shakespeare – Pure and Simple (Drama)
- Stoppard – The Deceptive Dramatist (Drama)
- Swashbucklers of the World Unite (Multidisciplinary)
- Telling Tall Tales (Multidisciplinary)
- What's New on the West End (Musical Theatre) *sponsored by Samuel French Ltd*

How do I Book?

30th November - Full course details released on our website

1st December 12 Noon - Booking opens on our website

Courses get fully booked very quickly, so be prepared and have your online NODA account set up ready

**NODA Theatre Summer School will run from
Saturday 27 July to Saturday 3 August 2019 at
Yarnfield Park, Stone, Staffordshire.**

NODA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 2019**25 – 27 OCTOBER****PEEBLES HYDRO**

**NODA Scotland Conference
25-27 October 2019
Savings Account**

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

As a guide, £25 per month from 1 November will be sufficient to cover the cost of your weekend package plus a little towards any extras.

Package Prices – Weekend

2 nights accommodation inclusive of all meals from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch including the Gala Dinner, workshops, welcome drinks reception and all entertainment:

- Single Room £286.00
- Double Room £275.00 (2 sharing)
- Triple Room £258.50 (3 sharing)
- Multi Room £235.00 (4+ sharing)
- Extra Nights £60.50 per person

Account Rules

The account will operate under the following rules:

- Payments can be made at any time and for any amount.
- Include your name as a reference when making payments to the account.
- When making your first payment, email your name and contact email address to stuart.dick@noda.org.uk
- The last date for paying into the account each year will be 15 October.
- Should you be unable to attend the conference savings can be returned in advance of the normal pay out date.

Account Details

- Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland
- Account Name: Conference Account
- Sort Code: 83-25-45
- Account Number 16109819

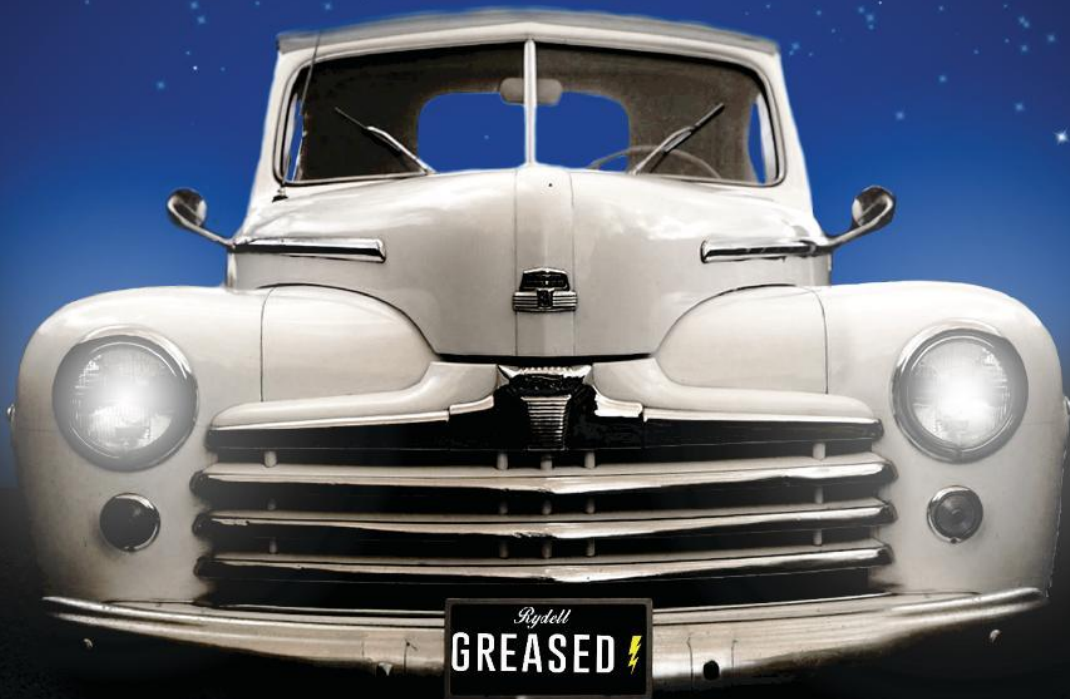
Questions

For any questions contact Stuart McCue-Dick, NODA Scotland Councillor (stuart.dick@noda.org.uk)

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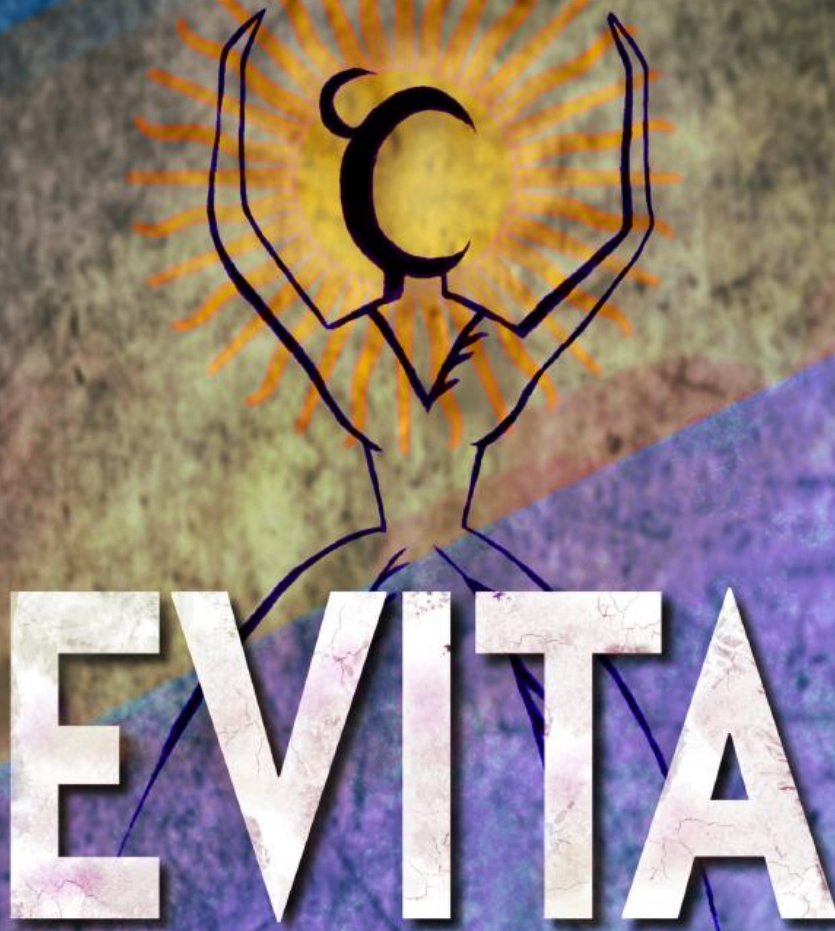
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EVITA COMES TO RUTHERGLEN

Windmill Productions is delighted to have been awarded one of the few amateur licences in 2019 to perform the Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, *Evita*, which will be performed in Rutherglen Town Hall, Glasgow, from 11 to 15 June 2019.

Evita charts the young and ambitious Eva Perón's meteoric rise to sainthood. Set in Argentina between 1934 and 1952, the Tony-winning musical follows Eva Duarte on her journey from poor illegitimate child to ambitious actress to, as wife of military leader-turned-president Juan Perón, the most powerful woman in Latin America, before her death from cancer at age 33.

The events in Eva's life are presented in song and commented on by the show's narrator, Ché. Well-known numbers from Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical masterpiece include "Don't Cry for Me Argentina," "Oh What a Circus," "Buenos Aires" and "Another Suitcase in Another Hall." *Evita* has strong leading and featured roles, plenty of scope for singing and dancing ensembles and one of Lloyd Webber's most-loved scores, combining Latin, jazz, pop and more traditional influences.

Windmill is a relatively new production company established in 2014, but with a wealth of experience behind it, covering directing, stage design and construction, and stage management, as well as performance covering music and drama.



Windmill Productions: *Nunsense – The Mega Musical Version* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*



Productions to date (*Whisky Galore – A Musical*, *Nonsense – The Mega Musical Version*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*) have been artistically successful, but small scale. To present a bigger scale show to a larger audience, the decision was taken to move to Rutherglen Town Hall, originally constructed in 1862 and, following a £12.5m refurbishment, is a five-star arts venue under the VisitScotland grading scheme. It offers great facilities for audiences – café, mezzanine bar, parking and excellent public transport links. The Grand Hall itself is a stunning venue and is unlike any other small theatre with comparable audience capacity.

Tickets for *Evita* are on sale from Rutherglen Town Hall box office and from tickets@windmillproductions.com
Further details: www.windmill-productions.com



Windmill Productions: *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*

Glasgow Light Opera Club: Oklahoma!

Director: Paola de Rosa; Musical Director: Alan Stewart Fraser; Choreographer: Catherine Dunn

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to The Glasgow Light's production of *Oklahoma!* A strong cast of principals, supported by a large chorus portrayed this much loved story, displaying the more serious aspects of the storyline intertwined with the comedy. There were a number of new faces, as well as the more familiar ones in the production, and all of them worked extremely well as a team to ensure the show moved along at a good pace. Peter Robson (Curly) was well cast in the role being equally talented in singing and acting. Sarah Laing (Laurie) also displayed her performing talent, bringing a young fresh approach to the part. Ado Annie and Will Parker played by Mhairi Caulfield and Kevin McGuire along with Ali Hakim played by Aaron Mooney brought the right level of comedy to the show. John Trever Hughes (Jud Fry) brought complete contrast to the light hearted characters in the show. Excellent vocal ability and acting showed his dark side, portrayed differently from what I have experienced in the past, and one which I particularly enjoyed. Sandra Craig (Aunt Eller) gave an excellent performance, bringing the right level of light and shade to the drama. It was great to see a wide range of ages involved in the production, and it is good to see that Glasgow Light continue to involve young people where they can in their productions – an excellent addition and an opportunity to encourage young people into the company where it is hoped they will continue forward into the adult cast in the years to come. For me the minimalist set worked well, bringing a modern approach to the staging of the production. Crawford Gray Stage Manager along with Victoria Louise West, Deputy Stage Manager and backstage team ensured this production ran smoothly. In summary, the production team brought an enjoyable show to the theatre, and a highlight was the dream sequence, which with its creative choreography and lighting worked particularly well. Well done to all involved in *Oklahoma!*

Helensburgh Savoy Club: 9 to 5

Director: Ewan Cameron; Musical Director: Pamela Frew; Choreographer: Claire Burns;
Assistant Choreographer: Joanne Trainer

I received a lovely warm welcome from Paul Lyden and his team at the matinee performance of *9 to 5* at the Victoria Halls. The opening number "9 to 5" got us off to a good start, introducing Violet (Kirsty McLaren), Doralee (Emily MacGillivrey), Dwayne (Brian Sayer), and Judy (Rosalind Philips). Added to this, the chorus were introduced, giving us confidence that the audience were in for a good afternoon of theatre entertainment. Franklin Hart Jr. (Kenny McLean) was played well as the sexist, lecherous and pompous boss, and while he tried hard to rule the roost, the women soon won their fight! Roz Keith (Rachel Gibbs) added just the right amount of comedy, executing the part well. Joe (Jordan Lee Sharkey) played his role with empathy and a good understanding of the character. Direction and choreography brought energy and enthusiasm to the stage with the whole chorus being involved in all the choreographed numbers, with the music and singing adding to the success of the production. The company was enthusiastic, worked well together and brought energy and warmth to the stage. Working in a hall rather than a theatre can bring its challenges. I had seen snippets of the set being built on the group's Facebook page before attending the show, and I was looking forward to seeing it all come together. Stage Manager (Euan Forrest) along with his stage crew (The Men & Women in Black) ensured that the show ran smoothly from scene to scene, despite working in what I believe to be quite restricted space backstage. There was a small issue with the sound at the start of the show, but this was soon resolved. Lighting was simple but effective, in particular when the small scenes were played at each side of the front of the stage. 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 production of *9 to 5*.

The Minerva Club: Footloose

Director: Roy McGregor; Musical Director: Josh Currie; Choreographer: Marie McElhinney

This was a show that was high energy from start to finish. The storyline was brought to life by an excellent line up of principals, each one of them ensuring that their role told their own story. Added to this, the strength of the minor principals, equally well cast in their roles kept the stage alive with their singing, acting and dancing. Rev Moore (Bob McDevitt) and Vi (Eleanor MacKay) really brought the drama within the storyline to the forefront, along with Ethel (Colette Dunsmore) and Ren (Chase Condon) arriving in the new town and trying to fit in. Ariel (Colette McCarter), Rusty (Emma Donohoe), Urleen (Rachel Hepburn) and Wendy Jo (Debbie Main) portrayed their roles well and supported by Chuck (Gary Fyfe) and Willard (Michael Donaghy) really made you believe in the tragedy that had occurred in the town and the impact it brought to their day to day lives and their struggle to change things. The scenery by Jack Murdoch worked particularly well. The open set which moved cleverly to depict the range of scenes, and the feature of the bridge added to the storytelling throughout the show. James Marshall Stage Manager and his team ensured that the backstage work kept the flow of the show running smoothly, and the change of scenes was well directed and woven into the production. The band under the direction of Josh Currie was well controlled. The music technology by James Dunsmore for Theatre Music Solutions brought an additional richness to the overall musical impact of the show. Director Roy McGregor along with Choreographer Marie McElhinney ensured the drama, high energy dance, and music brought a production of high performance values to the theatre. Well done to The Minerva Club.

The Pantheon Club (Glasgow) Ltd: Chitty, Chitty, Bang Bang

Director: Catriona Cumming; Musical Director: Kieran Young; Choreographer: Lynne Bustard

This, my last Show Report as Regional Rep for No.1 District, has proved to be one of the most difficult in my years as Rep. Not only because it is my last, but also because it struck me as a hybrid show. Report writing is a necessary part of a Rep's duties, but this show was different. Essentially a show for children, written by Ian Fleming, creator of the 007 regime, it has elements of pantomime, with the baddie, the Childcatcher, (Raymond G Morrison, in a total rôle reversal from his last part in *Priscilla*) and the henchmen spies Boris and Goran (Ashton Montgomery and Kris Morrisom), love element from Truly Scrumptious (Caroline Telfer) and Caractacus Potts (Stephen Quinn). Caractacus is the father of the children who discover the old, wrecked racing car, Jeremy Potts (Tom Barclay and Freddie Harris doubling the part) and Jemima Potts (Poppy ManGregor and Ruby Tucker doubling) and the family is completed with Grampa Potts (David Robertson, fully into the part with a partial headshave). There were further nasties with Baron and Baroness Bomburst (Gordon Downie and Clare Ryan) wanting the magical machine. The story becomes really far-fetched with the magical properties the car takes on, adding to the panto-like qualities, but resulting in a very enjoyable, well executed production as expected from this Club with a past varied repertoire. Other characters – Toymaker (Ryan Wells), Mr Coggins (Mark Paterson), Lord Scrumptious (Iain Bell), Miss Phillips (Sharon Taylor) and Violet (Fiona MacCallum) – were augmented by the ensemble of 22 and two teams each of 14 children, making it the largest cast of any show I have seen in my time as Rep, I think, but showing the strength of talent available in amateur theatre in the Glasgow Area, which I hope to enjoy for many years to come. Thanks to all the clubs over the West of Scotland who have honoured me with invitations to attend their shows. I hope my reports have been fair and inoffensive, because I have certainly enjoyed many hours of sheer entertainment over the last 29 years. Keep up the good work.

Ian Gray

Runway Theatre Company: Jack and the Beanstalk

Director: Robert Fyfe; Musical Director: David R. Dunlop; Choreographer: Nicola Fry

A lovely warm welcome to Runway's panto got the evening off to a great start. Jumping to the end, the atmosphere leaving the auditorium was filled with laughter, joy and happiness from an audience who had obviously had a great night. This can only be attributed to what happened in the middle, and credit must go to the work that was put in by the company in staging this great pantomime. There were many highlights throughout the evening and it was great to see Eric Goold's *Jack and the Beanstalk* brought to life with this excellent cast. Widow McWhachle played by Will Pollock brought many laughs with his interaction with the audience, displaying his quick wit, humour and occasional impromptu script! In true panto style the characters were brought to life with the baddie Fleshcreep played by Iain G. Condie not letting us down with his badness. Fairy Twinkle, played by Holly Steel, showed her talents in singing, dancing and acting. Jack and Jill, Antony Carter and Hannah Rice, brought happiness to the village while Weary Willie and Tired Tim played by Stuart McMaster and Neal Cowan, were just right as they portrayed the silliness of their characters. The supporting cast of fairy tale characters all added to the overall high standard. Bessie the Cow and Giant Blunderbore gave great performances. The puppeteers were amazing, bringing a special magic to the stage and you couldn't help but love the wee Ghostbuster. As always a performance like this never happens without the excellent skills of the production team, Robert Fyfe (Director), David R. Dunlop (Musical Director) and Nicola Fry (Choreographer). The backstage team led by Stage Manager Edward Gunn and Deputy Stage Manager Wendy Tilley ensured everything ran according to plan. In summary, a great pantomime loved by all. Well done, Runway Theatre Company.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE



Note to Society Committees:

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

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Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society: Titanic – The Musical
 Director & Choreographer: Frances Irons; Musical Director: Richard Waghorn

This show takes the audience on a wonderful journey with the crew and passengers of the ill-fated RMS Titanic – from the joy and excitement of joining the ship to the terror and stillness of its end – and the wonderful cast of Broughty Ferry AOS wrung every ounce of emotion from the score and dialogue, leaving many of the first night audience with tears in their eyes. The ensemble singing, especially in “Godspeed Titanic” and the Finale, was outstanding. Paul Campbell as Commander Edward J Smith gave a powerful portrayal of the captain forced to take actions which went against all his years of experience just to satisfy the ego of the ship’s owner J Bruce Ismay, played so well by Bruce Martin that you just wanted to get up on stage and shake him and tell him to listen to those who knew better! The trio “The Blame” between the Captain, Ismay and the ship’s designer Thomas Andrews, played by David Newton, was excellent. Strong performances were given by Ross Leslie as Frederick Barrett the stoker and Ruaridh Mathieson as Harold Bride the wireless operator, their voices blending well in the duet “The Proposal/The Night Was Alive”. Strong support was given by Scott McRuvie as First Officer William Murdoch, Jacob Dudgeon as Second Officer Charles Lightoller and Marcell Guzewicz as lookout Frederick Fleet. Ashley Gorman was a delightfully vivacious Kate McGowan, full of aspirations in the “Lady’s Maid” number with the other two Kates – Kate Mullins (Susie Long) and Kate Murphey (Carina Millar). Jill Davidson as the social-climbing Alice Beane, along with her long-suffering husband Edgar played by Ged Ryan, added a lighter touch to the events at their every appearance, as did Sandy Kennedy as the ever busy Senior 1st Class Steward Henry Etches. Jen Shearer was an elegant and imposing Charlotte Cardoza surrounded by her coterie of cigar smoking, well-heeled card players, John J Astor (George Anderson), Benjamin Guggenheim (Jurek Rzepecki), John B Thayer (Sal Baradhi), George Widener (Alan Calder-McNicoll), J H Rogers (Ewan Campbell) and lastly the boring Major (Roger Buist). The highlight for me of every production I have seen of this show is the wonderfully sentimental love duet sung by the elderly couple Isidor and Ida Strauss just before ship sinks, “Still”, and Graeme Smith and Elizabeth Wylie’s rendition did not disappoint. The orchestra under the baton of Richard Waghorn handled the difficult score beautifully. The relatively simple multi-level set worked well and, with some atmospheric lighting, added greatly to the drama of the evening. Well done everyone and Godspeed!

Douglas J Clark



Broughty’s *Titanic* was visited by National President Jacquie Stedman, Past President Bert Lumsden, NODA Scotland Councillor Stuart McCue-Dick and Regional Representative Douglas Clark. Hiding amongst the cast is local Regional Representative Roger Buist who was making a welcome return to the stage – can you spot him? The invited guests were delighted to have the opportunity to meet the cast and crew on stage after opening night and to wish them well for the rest of the run.

Downfield Mains Church Panto Group: Treasure Island

Director: Lyndsay Morrison; Musical Directors: Fiona Gill, Carol O'Rourke;
Choreographers: Amy McKay, Rachel Thomson

Normally I start this company's show report with these words, "This is the last show production of the panto season" – but, hey, let's look at it in another way: this is the first panto of the 2019 season!! And, saying that, a panto I have never seen, based on the famous tale by Robert Louis Stevenson. So, how does this work out as a panto tale? Well, all the famous story characters were all there (under another similar name), plus a few "strange" comedy ones to enable the pantomime element to come through within the famous tale. So, shiver me timbers, it was off on a jolly romp, with excruciating gags, as the Pirates and the Goodies fought each other to find the renowned treasure! Led by our hero, Jim, Kirsty Small made a great job of the likeable young lad, joined by his mum, Rosie Bloom, Fiona Gill, at her very comic best in the dame role who, on her every entrance, was greeted with the words, "Avast behind!". They set sail with capable Captain Mullet (Andy Mackay), the Squire – a superb performance this from Anne Mather – and, supplying the love interest, his daughter, Penny – Rachel Thomson, making a lovely and demure leading lady. Then there were the Pirates, a motley mob, led by the scurrilous, Long John Silver, a loud Brian Blessed voiced Steve Lowrie Mackay who, sadly, was rather unsure in this role. (And I loved his peg leg – a nylon stocking pulled over his leg with clothes pegs attached to it!) He was ably backed by a frightening Blind Ali, brilliantly brought to the stage in great piratical fashion by Anne Lindsay; and then there was the slithering, sleazy, Sea Snake Sally, craftily played by Pam McGrath. Josh McCallum, James Tosh, and Cara McKenzie also played additional named pirates with perfection. And it fell to Alyson Duff to appear as Barmy Beth, with her craving for cheese, which led to a sequence of cheesy jokes! Lyndsay Morrison brought her magic to the panto as Spirit of the Seas, and the dance Chorus and junior players were all perfect in their stage moves. Heave ho, me hearties, it was all great fun!

Dundee Dramatic Society: Spirit Level

Director: Mat Hodson

This festive themed play was a real Christmas cracker! When the play opens, we find husband and wife, Jack and Susan Cameron, setting the scene. But five minutes in we discover the fact we are looking at two ghosts continuing to haunt their old home! It turns out both had drowned in a boating accident! And, because Jack, a famous crime writer, is an out-and-out atheist, neither can enter Heaven! So, they both continue to haunt their old home and repel any would-be tenants. It works well ... until husband and wife, Simon, another aspiring crime writer, and pregnant Flic Willis decide to rent and move in – then the fun starts! The ghostly Jack (Graeme Murdoch) and wife, Susan (Gillian McCabe) are never off the stage and both bounce off each other beautifully as they exchange funny quips with each other whilst setting the scene with their ghostly (or is it ghastrly!) antics! The other tenant couple, Simon (Rory Dunn) and Flic (Shona Smith) are also seldom off the stage and both are unaware of, and do not see, the two ghosts in their rented house! The scenes with the ghosts playing tricks are hilarious to watch and although we, the audience, can see all four people on stage, our imagination is so stirred that we only see the two people on stage and can see the "ghostly goings-on"! This is wonderfully illustrated, visually, when local estate agent, a harassed Mark Webster (Alex Lindsay), is tricked by the ghosts moving drink glasses about in the air and setting wall pictures askew, and his keys turning up in different places! More laughs come when Flic's monstrous mother, a haughty Marcia Bradshaw (Pauline Carena), nick-named the Black Widow, arrives to attempt to separate the couple. Events then reach a climax – Simon has writer's block; Flic is heavily pregnant; so the ghosts then use their power and Susan calls for her Guardian Angel! She immediately arrives and is not the angelic figure one would expect! Jane Campbell was perfect in this part and tells ghost Jack he can help Simon write his book, and ghost Susan can look after the mother-to-be. Christmas arrives in the midst of a snowstorm, and so does the baby! In the midst of this crisis, atheist Jack does something quite spectacular ... and everything ends well for both the couples! This festive play is gentle and funny and one is left with a real feel-good factor! The programme notes say this play only came on to the UK market this year and this is the first amateur production. Other drama groups looking for something new should take a look at this play.

Tayport Amateur Dramatic and Musical Society: Annie

Directors & Choreographers: Lynne Binnie, Stuart Whyte; Musical Director: Harry Thomson

This show was the Society's Christmas offering this year and it worked an absolute treat! There was virtually a full house and the opening night audience enjoyed every single moment of the production. To set the mood during the overture, the audience was brought up-to-date with a slide show of big news events of the period that set the scene perfectly. Then it was off to the orphanage where the principal orphans (Evie Peoples, Poppy Hardie, Catherine Scott, Ellis Johnston, Summer McGrath and Samantha Flight) and the ensemble orphans all made themselves known, particularly in the brilliant and exuberant "Hard Knock Life" number which raised a great cheer at its end. By this time we had met Annie, superbly brought to the stage by Carys Morgan in an assured and competent manner and, with an amazing powerful singing voice to put over her big numbers like "Tomorrow" – a star for the future methinks. Another strong singing voice belonged to the horrible harridan, Miss Hannigan (Ruth McKay), who was always inebriated, sloshed, and

sarcastic, and this was evident from her big solo number “Little Girls”. Hers was a first-rate performance. Billy Naismith was impressive, as always, as Annie’s rich billionaire benefactor, Oliver Warbucks, stamping his authority on this role with a fine interpretation and he too had a rich singing voice heard to its full glorious effect in the beautiful “Why Should I Change A Thing?” solo. Claire Rioch was absolutely perfect as Warbucks’ competent secretary, Grace Farrell, showing much grace and elegance, and was also clever enough to be the one to spot the “fake” parents! Dastardly work and laughs came from the nasty, and naughty, duo of a sly, conniving, Rooster Hannigan, and saucy, sassy, Lily St Regis, played with great verve and passion by Neil Hutton and Eilidh Robertson who, along with his sister, Miss Hannigan, brought an energetic and vibrant “Easy Street” to the stage. Craig Nicoll bustled as the butler, Drake; Derek Murray was an imposing President Roosevelt; and Alan Kerr did his bit as radio man Bert Healy. Oh, we can’t forget Roxy who played Sandy the dog and also Mamie playing the stray dog! This was a real feel good show and it all went superbly to put everyone into the Christmas spirit.

Tayside Opera: Winter Concert
Musical Director: Richard Johnston

In their 50th Celebration Year Tayside Opera presented their annual *Winter Concert* – a selection of musical pieces from opera and songs from well-known composers. The evening got off to a great start with the company in full voice singing the rousing “Anvil Chorus” from Verdi’s *Il Trovatore*. Then followed a selection of many famous musical pieces – Eleanor Smith received rapturous applause for her “Alleluia” from Mozart’s *Exsultate, Jubilate*, and Russel Malcolm’s lovely voice was heard to great effect in Massenet’s *Pensée D’Automne*. Then came a firm favourite of mine – the “Ave Maria Intermezzo” from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, courtesy of Moira Docherty, putting it over in a delicate rendition. Another firm favourite of mine arrived when Michael Turner’s rich bass voice delivered a wonderful “O’ Man River”, which evoked many happy memories for me. The Kissing Waltz song “Il Bacio” was another great highlight from Frances Taylor, and Susan Jenkin and Natalie Stewart gave us a tender duet singing “The Little Road To Bethlehem”, because a Christmas theme did also feature in the musical selection too. And one could not forget the “comedy” song of the evening – Moira Docherty and Frances Taylor’s comic rendition of “Sisters” from *White Christmas!* There were big set pieces for the chorale and conductor Richard Johnston carefully guided the ensemble through the tongue-twisting “Rataplán” from Verdi’s *Force Of Destiny*, which was an absolute delight to the ear, and the extremely versatile accompanist Robert Duncan managed to play his own party piece for the evening. It was a most enjoyable evening all round and thank you, Tayside Opera, for keeping Grand Opera alive and kicking.

Thomson Leng Musical Society: Beauty And The Beast (Pantomime)
Director: Donna Bell; Musical Director: Billy Muir; Choreographers: Jenni Main; Donna Reilly

In my vast years of pantomime experience, I have never seen this story presented as a panto, but there is always a first! This well-known tale is recognisable through the well-loved Disney version but, in this production, the strong original story line still holds forth, with the panto element of fun and nonsense interjected throughout the tale. In this version book-loving Belle has two older sisters and their mother is trying to marry them all off to rich husbands. Belle was brought to life in a most charming manner by Tamsin Holbrook who meets and stays with the Beast to save her Papa imprisoned in his castle. Her two uppity, sophisticated and modern-looking sisters were played with great (and nasty) delight by Emily Moore (Chardonnay) and Terri Roberts (Lambrini). Both had fun when they went to the beauty salon to be made more beautiful! But both should have remembered that wine matures when old and tastes much better! Then enter Jean-Claude, our bumptious, (supposed) hero, played with great enthusiasm by Greg McGonigal as a handsome, big-headed, dashing idiot, and, boy, how he revelled in it with his bragging, heroic poses . . . to no avail, because he did not get the girl of his dreams. The panto element was brought to the stage in true Dame tradition by Tom Richmond as Dame Dolly, cracking gags and just being plain silly as he went along in a whirlwind of appearances. The principal boy, Prince Louis, was all “he” should be, a good-looking, striking, long-legged female and, Fiona McRobbie strutted her stuff perfectly in her role until she disappeared off stage when the Beast arrived in our tale. The Prince’s aide-de-camp was equally on a level acting par emulating the Prince and Lucy Reilly was also totally precise for the part of Jacques. Then, the Beast himself . . . Ryan Milne looked superb in this role and desperately wanted someone to love him in order to break the spell put on him by the evil Countess Cruella. There has always got to be a baddie in panto and Zoe Glenn, as the evil Countess, was a sophisticated and seductive villain in every way, but was taken to task by Fairy Rose, a French look-alike sprite, played by Jude Vandecasteele in an appealing manner. Nick Browne was perfect as Belle’s Papa and who could forget the panto animal Gigi, the horse (Cameron Bell)? The Society’s youth also made their mark throughout singing the many modern songs and the entire company were at their best in the big ensembles. This was a fine start to what is surely the beginning of this year’s panto season!

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See the up to date information on the NODA website.**

AWARDS AT LAMP (LINLITHGOW AMATEUR MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS)



LAMP members were presented with NODA Long Service Awards following their production of *Summer Holiday* in October: (left to right) Carol Fraser (30 years), Eric Brown (20 years) (Carol and Eric played the parts of Stella and Jerry), Graeme Scott (20 years) and Fiona Scott (35 years) (Graeme and Fiona are mother and son).

Big Bad Wolf Children's Theatre Company: Footloose

Director: Lindsay Dowell; Musical Director: Jonathon Graham; Choreographer: Emma Watkins Connolly

Bursting with life and talent, the young cast gave this production their all. From the energetic opening number, they engaged with song, dance and action in equal measure. His father having abandoned him and his mother, teenager Ren from Chicago finds moving to Bomont a challenging experience especially when he comes up against the local minister and community and their restrictive law against dancing. The themes of dealing with grief and the adult-teen relationships are sensitively explored. The principals showed they grasped the characters they inhabited, bringing out the poignancy in songs like "Learning To Be Silent" and "Can You Find It In Your Heart", yet also the exuberance of youth in the signature song "Footloose" and "Mama Says". The linchpin of the show rested on Paul MacDonald in his role of Ren. His singing never missed a beat and his confrontation with Rev Moore in Act II contained a blend of compassion and resistance that resonated with the audience. Freddie Bang showed his talents as the bereaved Rev Shaw Moore – entirely credible and a difficult role for him to portray. Hannah Pearson excelled herself as minister's wife Vi grieving too yet understanding and caught between the needs of her husband and teenage daughter. Lois McKean grew into the role of daughter trying to deal with the loss of her brother and find her own life. Mature and moving moments like yelling her feelings out as trains passed were well delivered; her singing and dancing were spot on and she was a

well matched singing duo with Ren. Making his mark as Willard Hewitt was Euan Arthur who brought pathos and humour to the role. Daisy Campbell as Rusty exemplified the difficulties found in trying to understand the tongue tied Willard. Daniel Scrymgeour played Chuck the villain with conviction as did Erin McInnes as Ren's Mum Ethel. The fast pace of the show centred on the energetic and acrobatic choreography. Good direction brought out lovely harmonies. Transitions from scene to scene were smoothly accomplished, costumes were age and era appropriate and scenery and lighting complemented the action. Great show. Such energy. Well Done.

Children's Theatre Bo'ness Society: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

Director: Jamie O'Rourke; Musical Director: Calum Campbell; Choreographer: Amy Hart

This was an excellent choice of show for these youngsters. The well known pantomime story of Snow White, her wicked Stepmother and the kindly Dwarfs was well coordinated with everyone playing their parts from the heart and with assurance. The songs starting with "Colour My World" were apt and good for young voices to shine while the movements of chorus and principals interpreted the words and conveyed the mood. It is pleasing for me to see over a period of years young folk growing into the principal roles and using their experience to bring their characters to life. Olivia Pattison as Snow White gave us a gracious and innocent princess quite at ease with her rescuer Prince Frederick, Isla Cadman. Their duet was movingly touching and well sung. Robyn Gilbertson as Queen Caligula was wonderful in her evil – expression, stage presence and vindictiveness showing a maturity beyond her years. She was ably supported by Cayla Rushford as the sly and evil tongued Blackwing oozing across the stage. In contrast, the light hearted role of Dame Dolly Dumpling was in the capable hands of Kieren West whose female antics, costumes and outrageous delivery of comic one liners had us all roaring. Fergus Canavan and Liam Hain gave us two engaging thugs Bogwart and Stinkwort – ones to watch for the future. Performing well in the supporting roles of Speak True and Danny were Hannah Kritzinger and Eva Millar Watt while all the Dwarfs were beautifully characterised especially Grouchy who never ceased to be grouchy. Not to be forgotten were the beautiful fairy duo of Fairy Goodheart, Charley Manger, and Wonderwings, Amy McIntosh, who both set the show in context and helped save the day. Overall, everything worked seamlessly: scenery and costume changes, lighting and sound and an impressive sword fight – all contributing to a successful panto where the cast enjoyed themselves entertaining their public. That is what it is all about. Well done, folks.

Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society: Crazy for You

Director: Gavin Orr; Musical Director: Jonny Graham; Choreographer: Christie Gowans

I have not seen this show in a long time and I had forgotten that this was where those marvellous Gershwin numbers such as "Embraceable You" and "I Got Rhythm" – so finely rendered here – came from. This was a spectacular show in terms of the visual impact of the scenery and the vitality and colour of the movement. The choreography was slick, fast moving and beautifully timed and tackled especially by The Follies in equally spectacular Tiller Girl-like outfits including feathers. Not to be outdone, lead Ian Davidson, well suited to the role as stage struck Bobby Childs, tap danced and sang his way through, initially pulled between two strong women, his mother and fiancée before finding love far away from New York in a struggling theatre in Nebraska. Comedy and mix ups follow as he impersonates too well the theatre director Bela Zangler played by a buoyant Gordon Gallacher. Leading lady Kirsty Meikle did not put a foot wrong in the role of Polly who falls in love with this impersonation, making her mark in her well sung solos and duets. Rebecca Anderson gave a powerful aura to the role of fiancée Irene as did Karen Ross in the role of managing mother Lottie. Equally well characterised were Colin Fawkes as rival Lank, Chris Brooks as father Everett, Lisa Goldie as loyal Tess and Alexandra Kerr as ditsy Patsy. Then bursting on to the stage were the tourists, the Fodors, namely Kenny Walker and Katie Gardiner, with their well timed comedic lines. Add in The New York and Nevada Ensemble and The Cowpokes and Hillbillies with their contrasting choreography and the officials provided a show where everyone seamlessly contributed to the whole. We exited the theatre once again entranced by Gershwin's music and having been hugely entertained. Well done to all.

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society: Dick Whittington

Directors: Yolande Borthwick, Derek D Easton; Musical Director: Jan Cunningham

Daniel Baillie and Derek D Easton gave this well known storyline some topical jokes and added fun slap stick to create another entertaining pantomime. Good chorus singing with energetic and well honed movement underpinned and enhanced the whole show. Dale Henry opened the story as amicable and helpful Fairy Bow-Bells who warned us all about the Evil King Rat who was terrorising London. In this role Daniel Baillie did a tremendous job of scaring the rest of us as well, his deep voice encouraging the youngsters to boo his villainy. Trying to combat his evil stratagems and eventually succeeding were principals Claire Coyne as the inventive Dick Whittington and Michelle Westwood as the pragmatic Mayor's daughter Alice. Inevitably they fell in love and their duet was one of the singing highlights. Taking the audience by storm with their antics and fantastic costumes were Derek D Easton as the panto Dame Sarah The Cook and Stewart Borthwick as a very Idle Jack who kept falling asleep. The children loved to shout to wake him up. Their swimming and kitchen slapstick routines, their one liners and rapport with the youngsters had us rolling. John Coe

fulfilled the role of Alderman Fitzwarren in more prosaic style. Tommy the Cat was played by Karyn Russell in more aggressive mode scattering the rats – in particular the pair of loveable sidekick rogues Scab and Boil performed enthusiastically by Tracy Allan and Lucy Andrew. Meanwhile Lynsey Craig was a graceful Sultana, Christopher Duncan a wily Wazir and a nice double act in the making were Chloe Kennedy and Andrew Gibson in their roles of Captain Kipper and First Mate Pike. As befitting a panto, costumes were colourful, scenery was well designed and scenes atmospherically lit. The audience shouting as loud as it could in response to events is a clear marker of the show's success. Well Done All.

The Livingston Players: A Bunch Of Amateurs

Director: John Doonan

This was a very funny play showing the difficulties of a theatre company trying to survive: in this instance by contracting a celebrity star to play the part of King Lear. Unfortunately, this star from Hollywood thought he was coming to Stratford upon Avon not Stratford in Suffolk and the fun began. Lynne Hurst as Dorothy had the task of casting and directing *King Lear* and keeping all the factions together and how well she delivered – accent, control of dialogue, stage presence were all maintained. Peter Tomassi as the aging celebrity Jefferson Steel revelled in the role – larger than life, contradictory and dramatic. As well as playing in roles in *King Lear*, the cast had their own identities and for *King Lear* roles had to be doubled up. The 'go to' man for practical help Paul Enever created his own moments of humour as Dennis Dubbins and Kate Halliday was the star struck Mary Plunkett who provided Jefferson with room and breakfast. Her championing of him disappeared when she misinterpreted his behaviour with another. She dealt with the change beautifully. Craig Potter displayed a real grasp of his ambitious character Nigel and developed the role with some nuanced deliveries and getting lots of laughs. As the link to the company's backers, the character of Lauren Bell was well interpreted by Jessica Bowman, while Chiara Loia gave her own twist to the role of Jessica Steel, the star's daughter, helping to create the moving climax to the play. The staging of the rehearsal premises with a projection of the inside of the theatre worked well. The props dressed the stage convincingly. The unaccompanied sung interludes were true and telling yet still, I felt, an interruption to the action. The pace of the dialogue never faltered, accents were well maintained and space well utilised. The whole entertaining evening was deserving of a fuller audience. Seasoned players were giving their all. Congratulations to all.



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Ayrshire Philharmonic Operatic Society: Betty Blue Eyes
 Directors: Linda Ormiston, Andrew Nicol; Choreographer: Gwyneth Grant



This musical comedy, new on the amateur scene, is set in 1947 in a small Northern English town whose citizens endure continuing food rationing following the end of the war, with the only bright spark on the horizon being the impending marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip. This setting made seeing the show on the Friday before Remembrance Sunday very fitting. The story follows the lives of local chiropodist Gilbert Chilvers, his wife Joyce Chilvers who has dreams of a higher social status, and Joyce's mother who is always dearly referred to as Mother Dear. Taking on these roles were Sharon McDonald as Joyce, Adam Dawson as Gilbert and Margaret Nicol as Mother Dear. Sharon brought Joyce to life by showcasing fantastic comedic timing, expressive facial features and character acting in this comical leading role. Adding to this with strong vocals and movement in many songs including her showstopper "Nobody" backed with excellent featured dancers. Adam portrayed a soft natured Gilbert combined with excellent comedy quips throughout. His solo numbers "A Place on the Parade" and "The Kind of Man I Am" were beautifully sung and acted. Margaret had the audience bursting with laughter from the moment she stepped on to the stage. Her delivery and timing of the ever-hungry Mother Dear's comical dialogue was genius, and the physicality of her character again just too funny. The highpoint for all three was in the song "Pig, No Pig", which was hysterical. The Chilvers, Joyce especially, are keen to attend a private function being hosted by some local businessmen to celebrate the royal wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip. The businessmen made up of James Nicol as the hard-nosed Dr Swaby, Allan Ward as the hilarious Mr Allardyce, and Ron Swanson as the entertaining Francis Lockwood, worked very well together and their song "A Private Function" was very well done. Another light-hearted comedy highlight in the show was the title song "Betty Blue Eyes" featuring Allan (Mr Allardyce) and Adam (Gilbert Chilvers). Another key character to the show is the cheeky daughter of Mr Allardyce, Veronica. Veronica was played by Téa Payne who used strong acting and stage presence to bring this bratty character into the story. The group of business men organising the party illegally decide to raise a pig for their function, which is when we meet Betty. The puppet of Betty was superb and so was her handler Nicola Hume who managed to blend unnoticed at times into the background of the scenes, but if you did look at her, she displayed sympathetic expressions and movements to echo how Betty was feeling – a very creative and clever role, executed well. The story progresses with Betty being stolen by the Chilvers, hunted for, found, considered for slaughter and then released. While all this is happening, and throughout the show, food inspector Mr Wormold, played by Graeme Strawhorn, is determined to stop activities circumventing the food rationing. Graeme's darker, intriguing Wormold was brilliant. He also managed to capture some humour in his main number "Upholding The Law" which featured some

dainty skipping dance moves to contrast the stern character. The story is developed throughout by an array of minor principal characters all ably played by a very talented and confident ensemble. The ensemble all showed individual characters which was lovely to see, and they presented strong choral harmony singing and excellent movement in the bigger numbers which complemented the themes and decade of the show's setting. I would also like to compliment the song "Magic Fingers" by trio Olive Lindsay, Paula Payne and Isobel Miller, which was beautiful and Lisa MacMillan for her portrayal of the snooty Mrs Allardyce. Congratulations for pulling all this together has to go to the production team of Linda, Andrew and Gwyneth for creating a dynamic and lively show with a very clever yet simple set. I was also very impressed by the speed of the scene changes, so a huge well done to Stage Manager Stuart McKinlay and his stage crew for that. In particular the technique and idea used for the larger banquet table in the later scenes, and how it was able to cross the entire stage while being set up and removed in seconds, was particularly impressive and inventive. Another fantastic success for APOS which continues their run of presenting newly released amateur licensed shows. I can't wait to see what they have planned for next year.

Eastwood Entertainers: Aladdin

Director: Roy McGregor; Musical Director: Cat Clark; Choreographer: Greg Robertson

Aladdin is one of the favourite pantomimes which gets performed at this time of year and with an exceptionally hysterical and well written script from Roy McGregor, this was an excellent version. The show was packed full of hilarious traditional panto gags, modern jokes, excellent one-liners, and brilliant characterisation. Playing the title role of Aladdin was Ewan Pringle who brought bravery and charm to this principal boy role, playing opposite Reece Thomson as a feisty and strong Princess Jasmin. Reece and Ewan's vocals in their musical numbers were beautiful. Providing a second love story in the show was that of Wishee Washee and So Shy. Ross McDougall as Wishee Washee used his slapstick facial expressions and comic timing to great effect and he was very engaging when working with the audience. Opposite Ross was the hilarious 'neddy' Adidas stripped kimono clad So Shy played by Zoe McFadyen. Zoe cemented herself as a comedy genius with her performance. Every moment on stage was in full character and became scene stealers, and her feature sections in "How Will I Know" were amazing. Continuing the comedy were Jenny McKay as the Empress and her handmaiden Anne Allan as Nannee Annee. Jenny commanded the stage in her side-splitting characterisation and worked well with the equally funny Anne. Keeping everyone in check were Jane Killin and Julie Cassells as PC Ping and PC Pong. The physical comedy in these roles was first-rate. Giving the audience their target for booing was Murray Constable as the evil Abanazar who reacted well with the audience throughout. On the spiritual side of the cast were Stewart McTaggart as Genie of the Lamp who used camp humour to give an entertaining take on this part, and Aly Lamond as the fabulous Spirit of the Ring who sang, danced and spread glitter all over the stage with great poise and style. The principal line up was backed up by an impressive ensemble who gave energetic dances and excellent vocals in the musical numbers. Praise must go to Roy for his excellent direction in pulling this non-stop show together packed full with comedy, Cat for her excellent work on the ensemble and principal songs along with the perfect selection of panto-cheesy songs and Greg for his excellent and varying choreography styles. In particular the work with the So-Shy photos and end collage in the Wishee Washee lead number "Isn't She Lovely" was ingenious. Congratulations to the full cast, crew and company on an excellent panto 2018.

Greenock Light Opera Club: 9 to 5 The Musical

Director: Ruairidh Forde; Musical Director: Gareth Bowman; Choreographer: Vikki Rodgers

This was my first visit to Greenock with the NODA hat on and I was excited to see their production of *9 to 5*, which is becoming a favourite show for clubs to perform. *9 to 5 The Musical*, based on the 1980 movie of the same name, features music from Dolly Parton, who via the use of projection introduced and finished the show. The show focuses on the stories of three women working under a boss who does not appreciate them, dealing with their own personal issues, and getting their own back on their boss to make their own happy ending. The roles of the three leading ladies were outstandingly performed by Sharon Tucker as Violet Newstead, Kirsty Campbell as Doralee Rhodes and Sarah Campbell as Judy Burnly. All three portrayed strong individual characters bringing the audience into their stories with warmth and comedy. Their individual songs – "One of the Boys" for Sharon, "Backwoods Barbie" for Kirsty and "Get Out and Stay Out" for Sarah were all equally show stopping. As a trio they all worked brilliantly together on the songs "I Just Might" and "Shine Like The Sun" which were outstanding. Congratulations to Sharon, Kirsty and Sarah for their first-rate performances. Their 'sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot' of a boss, the sleazy Franklin Hart Jr, was played wonderfully by Michael Lyden. Michael presented a strong character that the audience just loved to loath and combined great character acting with confident vocals, especially in his number "Here for You" which set the tone of the character for the rest of the story. His altering interpretation of Hart in the three dream numbers near the end of Act I was very funny and in fact these three numbers, along with the kidnap scene, was definitely the best interpretation I have seen. A comedy highlight in the principal line-up was Jacqui Templeton's performance of Franklin Hart's fanatical assistant Roz Keith. Jacqui's characterisation was brilliant; she had the audience in stitches, and her numbers "Heart to Hart" and "5 to 9" were hysterical, and very well done. The love interest for Violet is Joe, who was played by Gerard Gordon. Gerard brought this unconfident and shy character to life with a lovely singing voice and prominent facial expressions and

reactions. One of the benefits of this show for societies is that there are loads for the full ensemble to do. The minor principal characters of Kathy (Linda Mitchell), Maria (Aileen McQuillan), Dwayne (Jordan Benacci), Josh (Dylan Bonnar), Dick (Paul Alford), Missy (Elaine Graham), Bob Enright (Callum McDade) and Tinsworthy (Steve Gorman) were all great, complemented each other and helped the story move along well. Special mention should be made of Mary Goodwin as 'the office lush', hilarious Margaret, who only needed to walk across the stage at one point to earn a full auditorium filled with laughter. Director Ruairidh should be proud of the characterisation throughout the principal cast and for the clever staging and slick scene changes. The cast was completed by a very strong ensemble. The group of girls who would take on the more challenging dances were excellent, cheery and maintained their characters within the office scenes convincingly. The tap dancing featured in "One of the Boys" was brilliant, and the numbers where the full cast were involved in the choreography, very impressive. A huge well done to Choreographer Vikki for this success. Another of the key highlights of the show were the impressive vocals during all principal and ensemble numbers under the clever leadership of Musical Director Gareth. I thoroughly enjoyed my first official visit to Greenock and would like to thank the Club's secretary Molly for her hospitality and warm welcome. The Club should be proud of their show which well deserved the fantastic audience reaction it received throughout and at the end with some standing ovations.

Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth: *Sleeping Beauty*

Director: Sands Stirling; Musical Director: David Zochowski; Choreographer: Sarah McLaughlan

I do love a panto, and what better way to kick-start the 2018 panto season than with Harlequin's *Sleeping Beauty*? During the visit it was lovely to hear that the production team was made up fully of past members, all returning and giving back to the club which they loved being a member of. Their passion and dedication for the club and this production was evident through the enjoyment and energy of the cast. Also the support and encouragement given behind the scenes from the committee to this production team was inspiring. Congrats to Sands, David, Sarah and Kirsten (the producer) on their achievement. The stage at Eastwood was bursting at the seams with an impressively large cast made up from the senior and junior sections of the club. This energetic and joyful ensemble were led by a talented group of principals. Lucy Bastable as Princess Anastasia and Mark McLaughlin as Prince Nicky were a joy to watch as the principal girl and principal boy. Bringing humour and the audience into the show was Sophie Aziz as funny girl Nadia Nodinov and Ruairidh Burns as Dame Nana Nodinov. Nadia was in full control of working the audience and displayed so much energy in this role. Ruairidh gave an excellent performance as the dame with great comical timing and the 'falling asleep gag' used throughout was hysterical. Congrats to both for their excellent characterisations and audience interaction work. The royal family was headed up by a dottery Tsar, played by Jonathan Anton, and a poised Tsarina played by Kara McQueen. The relationship and interaction between Jonathan and Kara was very funny and worked well. Not all was love and happiness with the evil Dragan interjecting into the story to steal the crown and royal throne. Dragan the devilish dentist themed character was excellently portrayed by Joseph Cameron. Every baddie needs a side kick and this came in the form of Dmitri played by Iain Mair, who balanced his gentle side of the character with the strength he used to stand up to Dragan, who we discover is his Dad, to help save the day. Keeping an eye on the Princess and making sure that all was well, as in the tradition of the story of *Sleeping Beauty* were the three fairies: Abbie Aziz as Fairy Tiktok keeping an eye on the clock and loving everything about time, Luisa Walker as our bubbly and excitable Fairy Tatyana, and Matthew King as the in charge and manly Fairy Elfin. Supported with a great set, bright costumes and well executed physical panto gags, this was a fantastic panto.

Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group: *Freezin' The Panto*

Director: Carol McLaughlan; Musical Director: Kirsten Annie MacDonald; Choreographer: Fiona McGregor

On a cold December evening Johnstone was the place to be as *Freezin'* was certainly the coolest panto in the District. It told the magical tale of the Snow Queen with toe tapping musical numbers throughout and plenty of frosty sparkle. The kind-hearted Princess Elsa was the Snow Queen, gracefully portrayed by Shiranne Burns with Kirsty Reid as the more adventurous Princess Anna. Craig Inglis made a fantastic dame as Nanny Annie who engaged well with members of the audience and had us in stitches in the highly entertaining kitchen scene with Ross White and John Steel as the Heston Harriot the Royal Chef and Assistant Chef. Daniel McDonald gave an excellent performance as Patch the 'odd-job' village idiot who also displayed impressive vocals. Andrew Scott was well cast as King Bumble as was Mhairi Heron as Frosty the Snowman. Barry Orr was at complete ease in providing a first-rate performance as the chilling villain, Jack Frost. Musical numbers were well chosen and the presentation of solos and ensembles was of a high standard. The panto was well costumed with the set using LED panels which worked extremely well. This panto was completely new to me and everyone on stage worked hard to provide a most entertaining evening. Well done to one and all and I thank you for inviting me to your show.

David Black

Minerva Youth Theatre: Hairspray

Director: Susan B Russell; Musical Director: Chris Pugh; Choreographer: Donna Reilly

With a large cast containing many featured roles and ensemble members, *Hairspray* is an exceptionally lively musical, which is well suited to the energy that MYT bring to all their productions. The entire show was well cast with strong characterisation, enthusiastic choreography and impressive vocals. The show's leading lady is the chirpy and forward-thinking Tracy Turnblad who was played exceptionally by Kathleen Tierney. Kathleen gave a flawless and fantastic performance throughout the show with her comic timing in songs like "I Can Hear the Bells" and "Good Morning Baltimore". At alternate performances the part of Tracey was played by Samantha Barr, who I heard gave an equally excellent performance. The comedy in the characters was continued with Emily Gough as Tracey's adorable and eccentric best friend Penny Pingleton. Emily gave a perfect performance and stole scenes with some of her one-liners. In contrast to these two sweet characters was Christie McEwen as Tracey's nemesis, the confident and spoiled Amber Von Tussle. Christie embodied the character exceptionally well with great stage presence and faultless characterisation. Completing the Turnblad family, in a fabulous transformation, was Adam S Stewart who gave a confident and controlled performance as Tracey's Mum Edna. Adam worked fantastically well with Challum Brown as Tracey's goofy and comical Dad Wilbur. Their duet "Timeless to Me" was both delightful and hilarious in equal measure. Penny's Mum Prudy, who is over protective and close-minded, was very humorously played by Megan Watt. The third mum featured in the story is Velma Von Tussle, Amber's scheming and obnoxious mother. Taking on this part was Hayley Ferguson who confidently squeezed every inch of arrogance into her character, while bringing fantastic humour to the role which allowed the audience to warm to her at the end when she eventually joins in the fun with everyone else. Conor Manley was brilliant as the confident TV host, Corny Collins as was Adam Stewart, as the charismatic and kind-hearted teenage heart throb, Link Larkin. Adam's singing in particular was superb throughout. Another powerful performance was Monica Taggart's Motormouth Maybelle. Monica gave a mature and strong performance especially in her emotional song "I Know Where I've Been". The power ran in the family with Ellie Shaw giving an outstanding performance as Motormouth's daughter Little Inez. Ellie shone on stage throughout the show with strong vocals, a great feisty character and impeccable dancing. I could not take my eyes off her in the big musical numbers – just amazing. Completing the other main supporting roles were Aaron Hannah as a groovy Seaweed, Kevin Kirson as the eccentric Mr Pinky, Benjy England as a bold Mr Spritzer, Holly Cluckie as a stern Matron and David Kirston as the cool Gym Teacher. *Hairspray* as a show brings together issues and themes around open-mindedness and acceptance of others, which are appropriate themes for a youth group and this age range. It was lovely to see these values backstage as the cast interacted, congratulated and supported each other during the NODA Youth Award presentations after the show. As always it is a pleasure to meet the cast, so a big thank you to Susan, Tom and their team for arranging that and making me feel so welcome when visiting. Huge congrats to all on another fantastic show, proving that "You Can't Stop the Beat" over at MYT.

Paisley Musical & Operatic Society: My Fair Lady

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

It was a pleasure to attend PMOS's production of *My Fair Lady*, a show the Society has performed twice before in its history. As many reading the report will know, the licence to perform *My Fair Lady* had been removed for many years, meaning there was a lot of anticipation and pressure for this show's return to the amateur scene and PMOS did not disappoint with their production. The production team's interpretation was a breath of fresh-air. Special mentions should be made of Blair for his take on the dramatic scenes and character developments, Sean for the stunning harmony ensemble singing and impressive principal vocals, Greg for the energetic and intricate choreography and Valerie Goff (the producer) for her meticulous handling of the production. Bringing the production to life were a principal cast and ensemble who were all giving dedicated performances throughout the show. The ensemble in particular all committed to each character they performed and the energy in the cockney scenes and musical numbers was particularly infectious. No matter where you looked on the stage there was characterisation and individual stories being performed. The style change in character, movement and vocal control from the rowdy cockney scenes to the meticulous "Ascot Gavotte" should be commended. Leading this slick ensemble were a tremendously talented principal line up. From the second Lisa Dutch stepped on to the stage as leading lady Eliza Doolittle she owned it. Her warmth, likeability, infectious comedic moments and animated facial expressions were magnificent. She held the audience in the palm of her hand taking them on her journey, and stayed in character during every moment of the show with her powerhouse, triple threat performance. Just exceptional! The strength of vocals in "I Could Have Danced All Night" was exquisite, and the comedy in the marble and candle diction lessons left me with tears running down my cheeks with laughter. Playing opposite Lisa was Jim McPhee as Professor Henry Higgins. Jim gave a flawless performance throughout the show and presented so many varying character traits during his Higgins development. He brought fantastic humour to the part, along with impressive vocals, and in the end a vulnerability which alluded to the blossoming relationship and love story between Higgins and Eliza. Jonathan Proctor completed the three central characters with his portrayal of Colonel Pickering. Jonathan's humour in this role was exceptional. He mastered good balance within his gentle character to contrast Jim's harsher side of Higgins, as well as complementing him in the comedy scenes. Both Jim and Jonathan gave well-rounded

performances. The other man in Eliza's story is her dad Alfred P Doolittle, played by Iain Bell. Iain gave a very strong performance as the drunken cockney bringing humour, confidence and strong vocals especially in "With a Little Bit of Luck" and "Get Me to the Church on Time". Supporting Iain in his antics were Jim Munro as Jamie and Craig Ledgerwood-Cruikshank as Harry. Other standout performances in the principal cast were Christine McCormick as the witty and entertaining Mrs Higgins, Calum MacDonald as the charming Freddy Eynsford-Hill, Carolyn Lowry as the warm housekeeper Mrs Pearce, Valerie Goff as the elegant Mrs Eynsford Hill, Scott McCulloch as the crazy Zoltan Karpathy, and Vickie Moulds as the hilarious Mrs Hopkins and Angry Woman. Some of my favourite scenes and musical numbers within the show were; the diction lessons Higgins gave Eliza, the amusing conversation scene in Mrs Higgins's Ascot Box, Eliza and Freddy in "Show Me", Higgins "I've Grown Accustomed to her Face", the use of the purple flowers throughout the show to connect Eliza's progression, and the poignant finale scene which was performed so beautifully by Lisa and Jim to end a truly magical show. I would like to make special mention to the striking costumes, slick scene changes and the warm reception which the PMOS team extended to myself and Daniel. Also a huge shout out to their publicity, marketing and photography team for a well-executed promotional campaign which built up so much hype prior to, and during the show run. Well I think I have run out of positive words to describe this show, which seems to be an appropriate point to tie the report up. Huge congrats to the entire club for a truly tremendous production and re-establishing *My Fair Lady* as a modern day classic.

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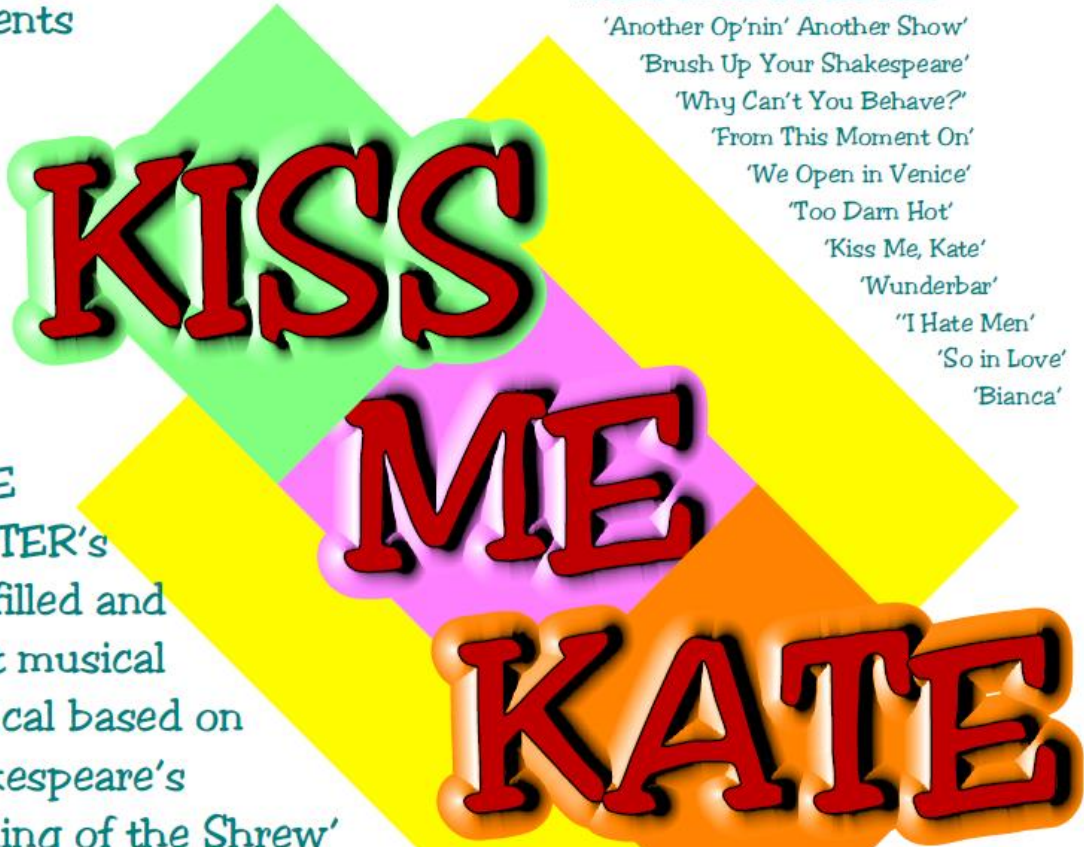
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Airdrie Arts Guild Drama Group: Beauty and the Beast

Director: Ronnie Mackie; Musical Director: Blair Wilkie; Choreographer: Cat Gemmell

This version of the tale as old as time by Ben Crocker, contained all the necessary ingredients to create colour and atmosphere, telling the French story of the popular *Beauty and the Beast*. As narrator, Eddie Gouther was brilliantly cast as Felix, the talking French Poodle, who won the hearts of all the audience throughout his comedic performance. Liam McKinstry provided an impressive accomplished performance as the Beast. Morgan Sloan played an adorable Beauty with David O'Hara as her handsome Prince Charming. Bill McCloy made a fine Dame who established great rapport with the audience. Adding to our entertainment included Kieran Sweeney, as Beauty's glaikit brother Jacques, and Louise Gavan as Capucine (his love interest), not forgetting Lorraine Keenan and Giovanna Tweedie as the double-act Castle servants Aimée and Remy. No pantomime is complete without a baddie and this was provided by May Wakley as Malabelle a suitably evil witch. Other principals included Cat Gemmell (Talking Clock), Nicola Young (Table), Nicole Cowan (Lamp), Colin Archibald (Chest of Drawers) and Bernadette Gallagher (Rug). All were ably supported by an enthusiastic ensemble of adult and junior chorus. This will remain a memorable pantomime having being drenched in fake snow during Act I and then in Act II forcibly invited (by Eddie Gouther) on stage to join the cast in the "Baby Shark" number. An enjoyable evening was had by one and all in the assurance that all lived happily ever after – even the Poodle found a partner!

Greenhills Panto Club: Alice in Wonderland

Directors: Paul Eunson, Joy Eunson; Musical Director: Paul Eunson;
Choreographers: Joy Munro, Katie Downie, Nicola Houston

In this adaptation of Lewis Carroll's fantastical world featuring many of the well known characters, Alice tries to stop the Knave of Spades from succeeding in his evil plan which can only be saved by a magical golden heart, supplied by the Wizard of Muddleup Wood (Scott Munro). In the title role, Emma Naylor portrayed a fine Alice with Veronica Wharton as her mum Dame Millicent who was again brilliantly paired with Paul Eunson as the Joker, presenting a first rate double act. Brian Shields made a suitably sinister Knave of Spades and Eleanor Hamilton and Susan Livingstone entertained us as a dumb and dumber Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee. John Brewster and Lynda Downie were cast as the King and Queen of Hearts with Rebecca Johnson as the Princess of Hearts and Lynn Meldrum the Prince of Diamonds. Emma Hamilton doubled up as the White Rabbit and the Mad Hatter who, with the other principals supported the roll-out of the story, in particular at a memorable Mad Hatter's tea party! Costumes were bright and the supporting chorus performed well in movement and song with a good selection of songs and great solos provided by Emma Naylor, Rebecca Johnson and Lynn Meldrum. This was an evening which provided the fun, laughter, cheers and boos of a traditional classic pantomime in one amazing Wonderland.

Hamilton Operatic and Dramatic Club: Thoroughly Modern Millie

Director: Alan Bayley; Musical Director: Elizabeth Pearson; Assistant Musical Director: Christine Robertson;
Choreographer: Amanda Letarte

Thoroughly Modern Millie isn't a show presented very often, so I was delighted to watch HODC tackle this modern classic. The story starts with, and follows, small-town girl Millie Dillmount as she arrives in New York City with a couple of suitcases in hand and a plan to marry for money instead of love. Millie is a very demanding part for any performer, but Claire Clark tackled it with effortless genius. One of the first people Millie meets in NYC is cheeky chappy, and heir in disguise, Jimmy Smith played by Markus Swift. Markus brought Jimmy's spirited character to life with ease and in particular his solo "What Do I Need with Love" was a highlight. On meeting Jimmy he points her to the Hotel Priscilla where she is introduced to the colourfully intriguing Mrs Mears, a hotelier, former actress and worker for a Hong Kong white slave trade played by Cathy Taylor who used her excellent comic timing and alternating accents to fill the auditorium with laughter, especially in the number "They Don't Know". Ably assisting her with the comedy were David Black as Bun Foo and Grant Ritchie as Ching Ho, her Chinese immigrant workers. What a joy it was to watch David and Grant work so well together! The duo joined Mrs Mears for the hilarious "Maqin" which had the audience in stitches. Millie befriends her 'Priscilla Girls', each with their own individual dynamic characteristics. Gillian Black, Joanne Denney, Kirsten Keenan, Emma Rodger, Rebecca Scott and Carly Slamin worked well together and were consistent throughout. Millie also meets Miss Dorothy, a bubbly girl of refinement, another heiress in disguise, whose songs are a mixture of usual musical theatre along with a requirement for strong opera tones. Nicole Dickie tackled this role flawlessly. Trevor Greydon of the Sincere Trust, was played wonderfully by Christopher Costello. The comedy where Millie 'flirts' with Greydon was fantastically funny and made by the way that Claire and Christopher worked together. Their speedy lyrical number "The Speed Test", backed by a talented ensemble, was excellent. Lorna McGowan brought a vivacious and glamorous Muzzy to life with a show stopping number "Long as I'm Here with You". Supporting the principal players in the show were a strong and assured ensemble who performed the many big musical numbers confidently. In lovely musical theatre fashion everything turns out well in the end: Mrs Mears' operation is uncovered, Muzzy unveils Jimmy and Miss Dorothy as her step children and all the love tangles are unteased. A huge well done to the production team and the entire crew producing this lively and well imagined show.

Craig Inglis

Monklads Light Opera: Legally Blonde

Director & Choreographer: Steph O'Raw; Musical Director: Patrick McClair

Legally Blonde is based on the novel by Amanda Brown and the 2001 film telling the story of Elle Woods, a fashion-savvy, sorority girl who finds her life turned upside down after being dumped by her boyfriend Warner, then follows him to Harvard Law School where she struggles to fit in and do well in her attempt to win him back. Claire Marie Taggart provided an excellent performance as bubbly Elle Woods with Clayton Wilson superbly playing the part of the charming but very self-absorbed Warner Huntington. This was a highly entertaining production throughout with great performances provided by all in the company, in particular Liam McKinstry as fellow law student Emmett, Angela Ball as Paulette the funny owner of Hair Affair, and Kirsty Waugh, Hannah Robinson and Jennifer Greenhill as sorority sisters Pillar, Serena and Margot. John Bergin was well cast as the pompous and manipulative law professor Callahan and Fiona Kerr was perfect as Vivienne the stuck-up, wealthy, smart driven law student. Patrick Rafferty gave a highly amusing performance as the smooth-talking UPS deliveryman, Kyle and Evonne McCord brought great characterisation to the character of Enid, the strong, opinionated, feminist law student. Although no one had faith in Elle, she eventually managed to surprise everyone by defying expectations in successfully defending exercise queen Brooke Wyndham ably played by Megan O'Raw in a murder trial and then all ends as we would expect. Finally, adding to our enjoyment were the performances of the two dogs Chico Azul, a handsome blue merle, long haired Chihuahua and Ozzy a British bulldog who is no stranger to the stage or TV. A most enjoyable show. Well done you guys!

Our Lady's Musical Society: Oliver!

Director: Alan C Jones; Musical Director: Rebecca Keay; Choreographer: Sarah Booth

Presenting this Lionel Bart classic, in the performance I attended, Connor McLuggage (8) sang and acted well in the title role as the innocent orphan boy Oliver born in the workhouse and Ben Robertson (13) provided a cheeky Artful Dodger. I understand strong performances were matched by Logie Spencer (10) and Oliver Cronin (9) as Oliver and Dodger in alternate performances. As the heartless caretakers of the workhouse, James Cassidy (Mr Bumble) and Anne Marie Simpson (Widow Corney) provided an excellent saucy partnership and Alan Orr with Ann Rodger were well paired as Mr and Mrs Sowerby, the insensitive undertakers who entertained us well in the undertaker's parlour with their assistant Noah Claypole (David O'Hara) and Charlotte (Hayley Stevenson). Andrew Rodger excelled as the miserly Fagin, revelling in the comedy moments whilst also bringing out the pathos in the character in "Reviewing the Situation". Laura Cowan delivered a great performance as Nancy and was ably supported by Bernadette O'Donnell as Bet. Robert Kirkham provided a suitably sinister Bill Sykes, Nancy's abusive lover. All remaining principals and the chorus added to the enjoyment of the show, in particular Violet Thompson in her performance as Old Sal but as usual, the enthusiasm from the children won the hearts of the audience.

Shotts St Patrick's Amateur Opera Group: Cats

Director & Choreographer: Judy Brown; Musical Director: Fraser Wilson

Matthew Coulter (Munkustrap), Ann Marie Totten (Jellylorum), Rachael Barns (Demeter), Lindsay Moore (Bombalurina), Paula Kane (Jennyanydots), Bryan Shallow (Rum Tum Tugger), Finlay Cook and Mhairi Steer (Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer), Joe Totten (Bustopher Jones), Brian Traynor (Deuteronomy), Ray O'Sullivan (Gus), Jame Brown (Skimbleshanks) and Gillian Coulter (Jemima). In presenting Lanarkshire's première of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*, Shotts Opera Group rose to and impressively delivered the challenge. In a special creatively designed set, the entire company performed to the highest standard through their singing and dramatic characterisation, celebrating as a tribe of Jellicle Cats on one special night of the year. From "The Naming of Cats" to the amusing "Battle of the Pekes" and the "Pollicles" leading on to the annual "Jellicle Ball", singing, stage movement and choreography from the entire company was sharp, slick and tight. With a strong line up of principals it would be unfair to single out particular characters. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention Marie Doyle as Grizabella the Glamour Cat who completely nailed the song "Memory", bringing the audience to its feet and also Ewan Ferguson's outstanding dancing performance as "Mr Mistoffelees". This was a polished production which all associated with the group either on or off stage should be rightfully proud of including the dedicated production team. The show *Cats* holds special memories for me and I was certainly not disappointed with the standard of this production. Well done!

NODA SCOTLAND MAGAZINE

Please e-mail material for inclusion in the July 2019 edition by Sunday 30 June to the Regional Editor at alan.jones@noda.org.uk

HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY, PORTOBELLO AND JOPPA PARISH CHURCH DRAMA CLUB, EDINBURGH!

This group, previously St Philip's Drama Group, also known as Brunstane North, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. We first performed together in 1969. Initially, the Drama Group was quite small in number and we performed full length plays, such as *Little Women* and *Pride and Prejudice* and various one-act plays. But as the group grew, it was suggested that we might manage a musical, as plays rarely have large casts.

And so, here we are, all these years later, still hale and hearty and producing a musical in March every year! Our first musical was Julian Slade's *Free as Air*. We went on to perform *Salad Days*, *Follow That Girl* and *The Merry Gentleman*, all by the same author.

We became braver, having learned many of our skills from Mr Slade's very 'British' productions and ventured on to the more flamboyant American shows. We performed *Love from Judy* and *Show Boat* in these early 'incorrect' days. *Carousel*, *Anything Goes*, *The Hot Mikado*, *Oklahoma!* and *Brigadoon* followed. Our cast members changed, of course, but as the years went on, we were delighted to welcome back many previous members of the group who still form the backbone of our present set up.

We toyed with the idea of attempting operettas and in fact, thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *La Vie Parisienne*, *Pink Champagne*, *The Gondoliers* and *Broadway Pirates*. We also had great fun with the Australian themed *The Merry Widow of Blue Gum Creek* which uses Léhar's glorious music with a very antipodean libretto! We even managed to produce a man-sized kangaroo suit! [Now available for hire from Dress Circle Costumiers.]

In 1996 the group had the exciting experience of mounting our homegrown show, *Brodie! The Musical*. This musical comedy, set in 18th century Edinburgh, was written by a member, Gavin Booth, with original music by our wonderful Musical Director, Nancy Kent. It tells the true story of Deacon William Brodie, who was a well-respected cabinet maker and town official by day, but a thief by night! Brodie also made door keys for the people of Edinburgh but kept copies and used them for robbery. The show is full of super songs and lots of humour! It had the additional benefit that we could use our own accents!

In 1998 this talented duo produced *Tinsel!*, a celebration of 1930s musicals. Again the show was full of singable solo songs and lots of chorus work.

At the moment our group is 40 strong: made up of fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, mothers and daughters, sisters, brother and sister, couples, old friends and new ones.

In this, our 50th year, we are again presenting *Brodie! The Musical*. It seems an appropriate choice for, as Gavin says, "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!" *Brodie! The Musical* is being presented in the Church Hall, Portobello and Joppa Parish Church, Abercorn Terrace, Edinburgh EH15 2DH from Tuesday 19 to Saturday 23 March at 7.30. Tickets at £12 for adults and £6 for children and students are available by contacting 0131-669 3123 or anne.mckerchar@gmail.com

We very much appreciate the continuing support of NODA and always look forward to the pre-show visits and to the real interest shown by its various representatives over the years!

Sheila Hay, Portobello and Joppa Parish Church Drama Club

Allegro: Popstars – The 90s Musical

Director: Andy Johnston; Musical Director: James McCutcheon; Choreographer: Felicity Thomas

WOW! What a fantastic, high energy production. The storyline may be thin but the show is packed with smash hits from the 90s including numbers made popular by artists such as BonJovi, Shania Twain, Celine Dion, Wet Wet Wet, Britney Spears, Backstreet Boys and Spice Girls to name but a few. A group of American schoolgirls decide to form a girl band in order to win a competition rewarded with a recording contract with Simon Austin, a Simon Cowell equivalent. Meanwhile a group of lads also decide to compete for the much coveted prize. So it's full on rivalry between the boy band and girl band. The level of performance from start to finish was of a consistently high standard from both individual characters and the entire ensemble. Maija Niva made a grand job as the pushy, arrogant Shannon who ditches her boyfriend Mark in her ruthless efforts to achieve her goal of winning the contract. Caitlin Davis came over extremely well as the somewhat dizzy blonde Tina and Stephanie Knowles was in great form as the more extrovert, vivacious

Stephanie. Trouble is that although this trio, the Candy Girls, can dance they can't sing and have to hold auditions to find a lead singer. Eventually they recruit Charlie and Amy Totty was impressive as the gauche, insecure Charlie who surprises and impresses with her "(Everything I Do) I Do it For You". Matt McDonagh pulled at the heart strings as the little boy lost, confused, heartbroken Mark singing "Always". Not to be outdone, he determines to form a boy band Y2K. He is joined by his friend Vinnie played with great ease and humour by Stuart Williamson and Shane, Craig McKirgan, a man of few words but plenty of action. Matthew Steel, the youngest performer on stage was a fantastic all singing all dancing Patrick and certainly a young man to look out for in the future. "I'm Too Sexy" was great fun and demonstrated the individuality of the characters in this boyband. Unfortunately this group has limited dancing skills and receive tuition from Ella, a hostess at the local diner. Lyndsey McGhee was perfectly cast in this part. Bold and leaving nobody in any doubt about who is in charge, she certainly belted out her numbers particularly with the ensembles in "Man I Feel Like A Woman" and "Believe". It's a pretty 'cheesy' show but all credit to the cast who were not afraid to play 'ott' thus bringing out the humour in the script. As in all good musicals, we find the usual love tangles but all ends well despite neither group winning the recording contract. Jonny Farley as the suave Simon Austin could certainly give Simon Cowell a run for his money! The large, fairly empty stage allowed plenty of space for the 20 plus fabulous dance routines. Choreography was engaging, sparkling and energetic and delivered with precision and verve. The company had so much to do with very little respite. Both singing and dancing were quite outstanding and were supported by an excellent band who also were kept on their toes. Well designed lighting and the circular video projection created the perfect atmosphere. Costumes too were excellent. This was a most spectacular, frothy production culminating in a full company megamix which was electric and had the audience on their feet. Many congratulations to this cast and production team for a brilliant evening's entertainment. Full marks from me for a splendid production which most certainly had the WOW factor!

Edinburgh Gang Show: Edinburgh Gang Show 2018

Directors: Andy Johnston, Jemma Crawford; Musical Director: Andy Thomson, Caitlin Morgan;
Choreographers: Louise Williamson, Jemma Crawford

Gang Show is always one of my favourite productions. It is gratifying to see so many young people taking the time and showing commitment in order to be part of a thrilling week of spectacular entertainment. Watching these youngsters having so much fun on stage whilst displaying their considerable talents is a joy. As always, the programme is a well balanced combination of song, dance and witty sketches. The opening section "Today's the Day" with the gradual build-up of groups on stage until over 200 brownies, cubs, guides and scouts in their red and white costumes filled the stage was exuberant and got the show off to a lively, colourful start. Each section which followed was delivered with confidence and enthusiasm by all of the cast. "A Star is Born" was a fascinatingly funny 'X Factor' type routine and once again Honor Dobbie was that 'endearing donkey' who made a wonderful job of the Tony Award winner "Bigger". I was most impressed with the Junior Gang and "Like A Rainbow". The willingness of these very young cast members to help each other to make sure they got it right was most evident. The fairly complex moves as they sang their colour related songs all worked well with the correct coloured T shirts grouped together at the right time. A most disciplined routine. There are some very strong vocalists in this company who produced some captivating performances. Tatiana Honeywell's "Hallelujah" was a real tour de force displaying a maturity beyond her years. "Rise Up" in Act II where she backed a small group of lovely dancers had the audience enthralled. "21st Century Broadway" provided the opportunity to showcase some interesting, lesser known numbers. Ailsa MacLean ("In My Dreams"), Andrew Knowles ("The Abduction") and Ellie Cochrane ("Monster") were fabulous and I did enjoy the "Hamilton/Dear Evan Hansen mash up" which was excellently put across by Cameron Kilgore. Katie Kistruck. Andrew Knowles and Ava McCaffer. Act II opened with real glitz and glamour in "A Dream" with fabulous costumes, set and staging. Matthew Knowles's personality well matched his performance as "I Wanna Be A Producer" and what a voice! I loved the men in tights too! The entire company was most impressive in "Stars In Our Eyes". "Waving Through the Window" is a beautiful number and Cameron Kilgore evoked feelings through the emotion of his performance. I think there were fewer sketches than in previous years "The Rub Of The Green" was very well scripted and very humorous with very well portrayed characters and more talented soloists – Alice Bailey and Sophie Martin. The company were still in full swing in "Celebrate You" backing a powerful "Raise You Up" from Emma Clarkson and a most meaningful arrangement of "This Is Me" led by Ellie Cochrane. As well as fine soloists, I must congratulate the entire cast on the energy and high level of performance throughout the evening. It certainly was full on but the energy level never flagged and the singing remained strong. I was particularly impressed by the lead dancers this year who delivered some very well choreographed numbers with real confidence. With so many lifts and throws there must be a real trust in the team. The costumes, thousands of them, were quite outstanding as were the lighting, sets and staging all of which could be favourably compared with a professional show. The exciting musical arrangements were well played by a wonderful orchestra. After an innovative programme of fun, colour and humour the traditional finale is always a moving ending to the *Gang Show*. I must admit that Lewis Boyd's "A Million Dreams" brought a real lump to my throat with the sincerity in his voice and facial expression. Surana Dee and Cameron McKenzie led the Gang in to Ralph Reader's "Thankful" followed by the ever popular "Highland Cathedral" and "Crest Of A Wave" which is always sung with great feeling and is a stirring end to the show. Once again, I must congratulate each and every person on stage for putting heart and soul into this splendid production. If ever there was

an example of teamwork, and camaraderie this must be it. The team of course is led by an amazing production team who put in a huge amount of work giving these very lucky young people the chance to be part of something special. I am sure that the lessons learned in being part of *Gang Show* will hold them in good stead for the future. Many congratulations to everyone who in any way helped to make this the spectacular production it was.

Forth Dimension Musical Productions: Pirates

Director: Melanie Smith; Musical Directors: Cameron Aitchison, Caty Kerr; Choreographer: Zoe Hogg

Panto is all about fun and there was fun in abundance in this production. This was a well scripted panto full of amusing one-liners and the occasional risqué innuendo which added to the humour. The newly married Cinderella is captured and taken to be married to Captain Bluebeard while her Prince Charming is thrown overboard. The search is then on the find and rescue them both. The story involves many well known fairytale characters and reference is made to their own fairytale plot so that children can easily identify who is who. This was a well cast production involving more experienced players working alongside some new younger members. Cinderella (Caty Kerr) and Prince Charming (Calum Bowden) were very natural together as were Red Riding Hood (Holly Whitehead) and Wolfie (Cameron Aitchison) who had a great rapport and were vocally well matched in their duet. There is always a 'baddie' in panto and Captain Bluebeard (David Hodgson), tall, commanding and scary, received all the obligatory boos and hisses he deserved. His deep, rich singing voice was also well received. Bluebeard's side kick Pirate Pat was well played by Sarah Murphy who lifted the pace when she was on stage. Zoe Winwick is a young talented girl playing the sweet Goldilocks who turns out to be a bit of a trickster. The Wicked Queen (Michelle Page) looked most austere in her black costume and was well supported by Number One (Yiorgas Perris) who, although he didn't have a huge part is a natural performer who makes his mark. I was most impressed by the three rats – Snuffle (Vicky Lane), Squeaker (Rachel Squires) and Sniffle (Emily Squires) – who along with the Cat (Oliver Teece) made a fine quartet and look like being the up and coming stars of the future. Once again Keith Bowden as the pantomime Dame Widow Twankey was flamboyant both in character and costume getting the audience involved whenever possible and bringing out every ounce of humour. His 'This Is Me' sung with the backing group of cat and rats was very well put across. The chorus of pirates were in great form with their 'aaaring' and really looked the part. They sang out very well and were very much together in the neat choreography. The ingredients for a good panto were evident throughout with slapstick, humour, fun, spontaneity, audience participation and a sing-a-long. There was the occasional straying from the script and ad-libbing but all the characters bounced off each other and helped out when there was any hesitation and for me this adds to the fun in a panto. The scenery was very effective, especially the pirate ship and the change from one scene to the next and bringing props on and off was well co-ordinated by the cast members. Costumes were excellent, colourful and added to the splendour of the performance. Forth Dimension's panto is always so relaxed and happy and gets me into the spirit of Christmas. This was a most enjoyable and entertaining production.

Musical Youth Productions: The Wizard of Oz

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

There was little sign of first night nerves with this very young cast. This was a slightly different version of this well-known musical but was so well suited to these youngsters who put their hearts into their performance and were obviously enjoying every minute. The four main characters were well cast and played extremely well together. Dorothy (Amy Thomson) appeared totally at ease in this demanding role, giving a charming, polished, natural performance. Her first travelling companion Scarecrow (Chloe Mitchell) was confident and assured with her floppy movements and mischievous grin. Tin Woodsman (Anna Pettigrew) looked and played well whilst the Cowardly Lion (James MacDonald) played his part with great humour and very good facial expressions contrasting his would-be brave attitude with his nervous, cowardly demeanour. This quartet supported and complemented each other along their journey to meet the Wizard, very impressively played by Finlay Ferguson, and his friends the sweet Gloria (Annaliese Mack) and the commanding Lord Growlie (Gabriel Duncan-Skelton) a young man with a real stage presence. Iris Scott was a most striking Wicked Witch Of The West with her malevolent cackle and threatening moves whilst Kate Johnstone portrayed a most attractive and serene Good Sorceress. Uncle Henry (Will McNeill), Tibia (Sophie McLean), Aunt Em (Priya MacDonald) and Witch 2 (Rachel Pettigrew) all played their parts with conviction. Principal characters all need the support of the other company members and the cast of Munchkins, Ghosts, Oz Soldiers and Girls, Farmhands and Jitterbugs all did a grand job showing great eagerness in everything that they did, all knowing the song and dance routines and executing them well. Costumes throughout were excellent and added a real sparkle to the production. Make up too was first class for the main characters and the wicked witches. This was a most enjoyable production of this much loved musical: well staged, well sung and altogether quite delightful. Very well done, Musical Youth.

Note to Committees:

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

Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association: Movies and Musicals Revue 2019

Director: Graeme Aitken; Musical Director: David Gibson; Choreographer: Lisa McLeod

This was a most interesting and varied programme of well known musical numbers from movies and musicals past and present. "The Greatest Show" from this recently popular film "The Greatest Showman" got the evening off to a resounding and colourful start with Mitch and the company all looking the part and in fine voice. The direction and choreography as with the other big company numbers was slick and strong. "One Short Day" which concluded the first act was another example of powerful singing, excellent movement and eye-catching costumes. There was some impressive choral singing throughout the evening. The harmonies in "We Belong" were clearly heard and the final "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now", "Aint No Mountain High Enough" and "Never Forget" really showcased some fine choral work. I must congratulate the male chorus. The soloists and blend of voices in "I Don't Want To Miss A Thing" were most enjoyable. The male chorus certainly showed its versatility with the fabulous "We Are What We Are" where inhibitions were cast aside as they strutted their stuff in daring costumes and with confidence. The female chorus were in fine form too in "The Loco-Motion" and let their hair down in the ever popular "Super Trouper". There is a real cross section of ages in this company and it is good to see the children and adults working so well together. The youngsters certainly came into their own with a most enthusiastic "It's A Hard Knock Life" and dynamic "Revolting Children". One of the most endearing moments in the show was where young Livvy was supported and encouraged by an older member to deliver a delightful "Somewhere Over The Rainbow" – a true example of team work and the importance of developing the potential in youngsters. A revue like this offers opportunities for individuals who may not always be ready or suited to playing principal roles in a full scale musical production to have their chance to shine. Caroline was a great lead singer in "Sister Suffragette". Joanne's "On My Own" was so sweet and innocent and Gill's "Hopelessly Devoted to You" were put across with great feeling. There were some very tranquil moments too. Bob and the male chorus in "Let It Be" was a joy to listen to as was the beautiful duet "Somewhere" sung by Joyce and Laura. This was altogether a most enjoyable production which was extremely well staged with gutsy singing, emphatic choreography, colourful costumes and lighting which was well suited to each situation. Jane and the company gave a taste of the company's spring production of *Blitz* with a rousing "Who's That Geeze Hitler". In my opinion this was one of the best revues and I very much look forward to seeing *Blitz*. Good work, MAMA.

Threepenny Theatricals: Dear Brutus

Director: Fiona Main

I was delighted to be asked by Threepenny Theatricals to attend their second production, *Dear Brutus* by JM Barrie, better known as the author of *Peter Pan*, this play sometimes being described as 'Peter Pan for grown-ups'. On Midsummer Eve in a mysterious English country house we gradually, through the first act, meet a group of strange house guests unsure why they have been invited. The only thing they have in common is a desire to have a second chance. The second act sees them given this chance in a magical wood before act three sees them return to the present time to reflect on what had happened. From the very opening moments of the play the audience were treated to a wonderful display of acting and characterisation by everyone on stage. Each member of the cast captured the very essence of their character and maintained that at all times on stage. This is very much an ensemble piece and there were no weak links. I believed in every character and was drawn into the action by them – I wanted to find out more about them. Testimony to all of this was the absolute still of the audience throughout the play – the actors had us captivated from start to finish. The set, built and in the main furnished by the cast, was evocative of both the location and era and was greatly enhanced by well designed lighting. An added layer was the sound scape – I particularly liked the constant tick of the grandfather clock in the house which added to the realism of the piece. All of this was complemented by costumes appropriate to both the individual characters and the time period. It is great to see drama alive and well within NODA – keep up the excellent work. On the night I was there it was a small but appreciative audience – this play deserved a full house every night.

Stuart McCue-Dick

NEW LIFE MEMBER AT LEVEN AMATEUR MUSICAL ASSOCIATION

Leven Amateur Musical Association (LAMA) is delighted to announce the appointment of a new Life Member, Charles Small. Charles joined the company in 1971 and has consistently gone above and beyond in his commitment to the society and its members.

During his time with us, he has taken on a variety of roles – playing principal characters on stage, as well as being a member of the ensemble, and taking on production duties, first as choreographer, then later as producer. In recent years he has also been a strong supporter of our youth section, serving on the committee of LAMA Youth.

Charles is well known to everyone at LAMA as someone with great patience and kindness. He always seems to know the right time to give a word of encouragement or well-judged feedback. He also has great vision – his production work on *Chess* and *Children of Eden* being particular highlights. He tackled these challenging shows with verve and ambition.

We are fortunate to have Charles in our corner, and both he and his wife Margaret are great friends to us all. He was unanimously voted a Life Member at LAMA, and we were delighted that he accepted. Associations like ours rely on people like Charles who give so generously of their time and talents, so the award of Life Membership is our way of showing both our thanks and our love.

Carole Patrick, President, Leven Amateur Musical Association

Artistic Concert Experiences: Ace Chorus Entertains

Director: Rona McKenzie; Musical Director: Richard Johnstone

I finished last year's review with the words "I look forward to next year" and I wasn't disappointed. The concert started with "On a Wonderful Day Like Today" and what a wonderful evening it was. As usual ACE chorus served up a variety of company and solo numbers from a wide range of genres. Richard Johnstone and Rona McKenzie obviously know their company and orchestra well and are not afraid to challenge them with some difficult pieces. From the up tempo "Razzle Dazzle" sung by Ben Brown to the heartfelt "As Long As He Needs Me" sung by Liz Shearer, the first half of the concert got off to a good start. The gents chorus were particularly good this year with a rich rendition of "From Russia with Love". Alan McTee channelled his inner Roy Orbison to sing "Pretty Woman". Some popular numbers from the 60s featuring a range of soloists followed with some nice production touches in "Seven Little Girls". The first half finished with "One Day More" from *Les Misérables*, always a popular choice. The second half kept the momentum going. It was nice to hear the company sing something different with "You've Got A Friend In Me" from *Toy Story*. Sharlene Wyllie sang a beautiful version of "Wind Beneath My Wings". Particular mention has to go to the one-man percussion section of the orchestra who seemed to play every percussion instrument available, often two at a time with different rhythms during this song. As I have often said in these reviews, it is so good for a choir to be supported by an orchestra of this standard. Their own show piece was the overture from *Mack and Mabel*. Other soloists who deserve a mention are Ian Brown who sang the powerful "Music Of The Night" from *Phantom* and Kara Conway who sang Gershwin's "Someone To Watch Over Me". The company finished the concert with a rousing "Blow Gabriel Blow" and as we have come to expect an encore that we were encouraged to join in with of a selection of well known 60s songs including "Walking Back to Happiness". I, once again, look forward to walking (well driving) back to see ACE Chorus again next year.

Alison Pendlowski

Cupar Amateur Musical Society: 9 to 5

Director: Scott Melvin; Musical Director: Stuart Murray; Choreographer: Lorna Lewis

With the warmest of welcomes from the front of house team, the evening was off to a good start. Seeing the colourful open set from the minute you entered the hall also gave you the feeling that you were in for a night of good theatre, and I wasn't disappointed. The energetic start to the show led into the busy office environment of Consolidated Industries. I feel that I really have to mention this scene as one that stood out for me. The detail in the direction to achieve the portrayal of daily office life in a busy company was quite outstanding. The energy from the stage continued throughout the performance. Laura Spence (Violet) was well cast in the role being equally talented in all three aspects of singing acting and dance. Doralee (Deirdre MacFarlane) gave a solid and convincing performance as 'the backwoods Barbie' and Judy (Helen Knowles-Venters) showed good strong vocal and acting ability as she found her way in the new job. Franklyn Hart Jr. played by Andrew Doig did not hold back and gave a very convincing performance as the sexist, lecherous and pompous boss, and while he tried hard to rule the roost, the women won in the end! Shows like this are never complete without a supporting cast of principals and ensemble. Each and every one of them worked as hard as the next person to bring high energy and warmth to the stage. There is always a technical challenge when working in a hall rather than a theatre with full facilities. With tight wing space and limited facilities, the crew under the direction of Stage Manager Sheona Goodall worked well as a team to ensure the technical aspects of the performance ran smoothly. The open set worked well and use of simple but effective lighting assisted with the small scenes that took place at either side of the stage. As always a performance like this never happens without the excellent skills of the production team, Scott Melvin (Director) ensured that every aspect and detail that needed to be in the performance was there. The band under the direction of Stuart Murray was tight and the coordination between the pit and the stage was very much together with an excellent balance of sound. Choreography was modern and slick and it was good to see the full company involved. In summary, a great performance. Well done, Cupar Amateur Musical Society.

Liz Daniels

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Cupar Youth Musical Theatre: High School Musical (Junior Version)

Director: Jude Vandecasteele; Musical Director: Emily Middleton; Choreographer: Rachel McNicol

Like the adult society in Cupar, Cupar Youth always deliver. This year found the Company losing some of their more experienced members. However, these have been replaced with younger blood, who are obviously keen and enthusiastic to make their mark on the musical scene. *High School Musical* is described by its authors as a modern adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, and, I suppose, this likeness can be found at times within the show. Troy (Josh Sinclair) and Gabriella (Rosie Jeffrey) were a well matched pairing who worked confidently together. Sharpay (Abbie Cook) carried off her perceived superior attitude extremely well and together with Ryan (Shane Franks) performed their duet "What I've been Looking For" with consummate ease. Ms Darbus (Islay McParland) is arguably the "character" in this musical, and tonight, Islay didn't disappoint, managing to bring out every ounce of humour in the part and its timing. The leading principals were suitably aided by a "chorus" of minor named characters, all of whom brought their own style and character to the show. Several cast members with suitable encouragement will, I am certain, progress to more demanding roles within Cupar Youth, and eventually to the adult company. Well done to Jude Vandecasteele for directing a performance that held together well. Choreographer Rachel McNicol kept the cast moving well, bearing in mind the tight confines of the Corn Exchange stage. Finally, praise must go to Musical Director, Emily Middleton, who ran a tight ship musically! Well done Cupar Youth, and many thanks for the invite.

Dunfermline Gilbert & Sullivan Society: The Sorcerer

Director: Fiona Main; Musical Director: Eddie MacLennan

This was indeed a most innovative, imaginative production of perhaps one of the less popular G&S operettas. Normally set in the Victorian period, this production was updated to the Roaring Twenties and whilst every principal character remained as written, each company member depicted a famous character from that era. As the curtain rose revealing a charming, colourful rural village in Ploverleigh, the guests waiting to celebrate the wedding of Aline and Alexis were not just a 'chorus' of villagers but 28 celebrities such as Hercule Poirot, Jeeves, Winston Churchill, Agatha Christie, Mary Pickford etc.etc. A great deal of thought must have gone in to researching and selecting the characters and the result was quite ingenious with every cast member an individual who had a part to play. The impact of such a variety of costumes was quite stunning. There was also a solid principal line up. Aline (Louise Thomson) and Alexis (Neil French) were a well matched couple both giving vocally strong solo performances and their voices blending beautifully in their duets. Alexis has the rather naive idea of summoning the Sorcerer, John Wellington Wells, to add a 'love at first sight' philtre to a teapot so that all who drink the tea will fall asleep and find love with the first person they see when they awake. This inevitably led to some bizarre pairings. Nathan Dicks was a spritely, spirited Sorcerer displaying real vocal agility in his patter song. The finale of Act I when the spell is administered was most effective with ghosts, flames and flashes and the slow motion and lighting as people fell asleep was most atmospheric. Robin Ozóg gave a polished performance as the upper crust Sir Marmaduke trying to hide his true feelings for the stylish Lady Sangazure (Liz Landsman) who brought some of the most comedic moments in the piece particularly in her duet with the Sorcerer himself when she falls for him. The lower class Mrs. Partlet was ably played by Jan Renton. Both she and her love sick daughter Constance (Fiona Main) maintained their Somerset accents throughout and were a good duo. Fiona's characterisation of the spectacled, freckle faced somewhat gauche Constance was brilliant with great comedy timing. The love sick Constance is suffering from unrequited love from the vicar Dr Daly and Ross Main was well suited to this part both in appearance and vocally. As in many of the Savoy operettas, there are wonderful ensemble numbers particularly in Act II where the blend of voices was excellent. The choral singing throughout was full bodied with harmonies coming through strongly. *The Sorcerer* may not be one of G&S's most well-known operettas but it is full of fun and wonderful music and this company gave credit to both the score and the script. This was certainly a most original and magical production which was extremely well directed and very well received by a most appreciative audience.

Dorothy Johnstone

Fife Opera: Cinderella

Director: Douglas Nairne; Musical Director: Alistair Digges; Choreographer: Michael Scott

This was a rare opportunity to see a fully staged performance of Massenet's *Cinderella*, and in true Fife Opera fashion, they did it in style! The performance was, principal-wise, double cast, and I was fortunate enough to see both casts in performance. In the title role, Susanna Davis – a mere 17 years old – and Myrna Tennant shared this demanding part. Each – and I have to say this about all the pairings – found different styles within the character, and brought this over adequately to the small but appreciative audiences. The "wicked" stepmother Mme de la Haltière (Elaine Young / Barbara Scott) calls for singers with both vocal and acting talents, and here we found both. The facial expressions were so amusing in many instances. Further amusement was caused, of course, by Cinderella's sisters, Noémie (Louise Thomson / Rebecca Anderson) and Dorothée (Katie Forrest / Amaya Lopez-Carramero), whose rivalry was visible throughout, up to and including the calls – all in good taste, I hasten to add! Everyone loves the Fairy Godmother

(Jasmine Munns / Laura Curran) and this was no exception in this production. Cinderella's father, Pandolfe, was exquisitely characterised by Ivor Klayman and Jonathan Sedgwick, with their duet with Cinderella in Act IV being one of the highlights of the evening. The wheelchair-bound King (Tom Kelman / Douglas Nicholson) brought the necessary touch of regality to the opera, emphasized even more so by the despondent Prince, equally dramatically acted and sung by Grace Wain and Jane Monari. Together with a host of minor principals, the chorus and the children's chorus, as has become traditional with Fife Opera, shone with a wonderful full sound emanating from the stage. Director Douglas Nairne managed to extract the maximum of performing talent from his cast and made use of John Urquhart's extremely workable set to the full. Final praise must go to Alistair Digges and his first class orchestra – a pleasure to listen to, not just for one performance, but for two consecutive shows. Long may opera continue in Fife!

Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society: Hello, Dolly!

Director: Alasdair Hawthorn; Musical Director: Ronan Corkey; Choreographer: Carol Sinclair

Hello, Dolly! has become one of the most enduring hits in musical theatre since its first performance in 1964. Almost every number in the show is known to audiences and, I am sure, causes them to sing and hum the tunes well after the final curtain. Tonight the show went up in fine form, showcasing the excellent KAOS chorus – all beautifully costumed I may add! Dolly Levi (Anne Marie Miller) gave a powerful performance, although, if I may suggest, the slowing down of deliveries would make the character easier to understand at times. Dolly was suitably paired with Horace Vandergelder (Charlie Sinclair), well-cast and convincing as the half-a-millionaire, who manages to avoid succumbing to Dolly until the end of the show! A large part of the humour in the show is provided by Cornelius (Tony Livingston) and Barnaby (Scott Binnie). They worked extremely hard and paired well, both with each other and with their partners Minnie (Sophie Penman) and Irene Molloy (Deirdre McFarlane). Deidre gave a simply superb characterisation of the hat shop owner. Her part in the opening quartet in Act II was a delight to listen to and performed with just the right amount of "Elegance"! Rudi (Clark Graham) was in fine form as the Head Waiter as he organised a lively "Waiters' Galop" in Act II. Minor principals all worked well, with Ian Davidson, yet again, finding a cameo role – this time as the Irish police officer in the courtroom scene. Choreography was neat and tidy under the watchful eye of Carol Sinclair. Musical Direction by Ronan Corkey was never overstated, allowing the sound operator an easier job in this circumstance. Director Alasdair Hawthorn was on the ball as usual, never allowing attention to drop and getting the most out of his talented cast. Stage Manager John Urquhart, together with his backstage team, ensured a smooth running show set-wise, while his wife Anne cued the show with exquisite timing. Sadly, I understand that this may be Anne's last show on the book – a huge loss and a very hard act to follow! Well done KAOS!

Kirkcaldy Youth Music Theatre: Chicago – High School Edition

Director: Monica Holland; Musical Director: Alan Urquhart; Choreographer: Jillian 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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Eyemouth & District Community Youth Theatre Group: Sleeping Beauty (Alan Frayn)

Directors, Musical Directors & Choreographers: Pauline Grieve, Andrea Thacker, Carly Robertson, Joan Blatchley

Good Fairy Lilac (Cody Watkinson), Bad Witch Hazel (Alisha Cooledge), Muddles (Max McNeil), King Cactus (Mack Blackie/Mason Skene), Queen Marigold (Jessica Isgate), Nurse Hettie Harpic (Campbell McNeil), Fetch (Sebastian Aitchison), Carry (Monty McNeil), Fairy Red (Keeley-Jo Virtue), Fairy Orange (Abi O'Neill), Fairy Yellow (Evie Virtue), Fairy Green (Livi Hamilton), Fairy Blue (Dani Peakman), Grim the Henchman (Mia Jappy), Princess Rose (Colbie-Kate Ross/Paige Hawrylewicz), Prince Alexis (Rosie Mitchell/Rose McTavish) Lead dancer/singer (Mirren McTavish). This pantomime was a show-piece from start to finish. It had so many wonderful moments, making the production worthy of glowing compliments and rapturous applause. Visually, there was a huge effort made with the set, wipes and slick scene changes. The fabulous attention to detail with the stunning costumes and colourful themes, displayed much thought and organisation, even including the girls' perfectly pleated hair. The size of the cast in the fully inclusive numbers was testament to the dedication of the production team, who gave so many youngsters the opportunity to be part of an amazing experience. The introduction, by the perfectly cast Fairy Lilac and Witch Hazel, set the scene for what promised to be a memorable production of *Sleeping Beauty*. The show opened by featuring the opening chorus to *The Greatest Showman*, where the lead dancer, in her bright red sequined jacket took centre stage. She sang and moved with great ease and the mega colourful townsfolk added to the spectacle. The young Muddles had not a moment's hesitation in engaging with the audience. Although this young man has been playing roles from early childhood, he has now grown to take his place amongst the more experienced players of the company. It should be no surprise to know that his motherly mentor in the shape of Nurse Hettie for this show, is his real father at home and no doubt a major 'on stage' influence. Nurse Hettie Harpic hit the stage with the audience pleaser, "Hit Me Baby, One More Time", supported by a fabulous, stripy dressed, dance troupe. Fetch and Carry delivered their Post Haste sketch with comic precision and used their synchronicity to make them a really viable duo. The number "True Colours" was in the perfect hands of Fairy Lilac and the dancing Rainbow Fairies, who were all beautifully adorned in their own colour with wig to match. The "On Top of the World" vision of the courtiers in the Royal Christening scene, appeared idyllic, until bad witch Hazel dramatically entered to disrupt the proceedings and cast her vicious spell. As time moves on to Rose's school days, we are transported to a *Matilda* like schoolroom scene, opening in uproar with a brilliantly sung "Revoltin' Children" and quickly dissolved into hilarious shenanigans with Muddles and Hettie as she challenged the classroom in a quick fire round of questions. Rose's birthday party started with a dynamic "Can't Stop the Beat". The scene was beautifully dressed with dancers in black and white, the King and Queen in a stunning white and gold and Rose perfectly clad in pale sparkling pink. Not to be outdone, Hettie led a super upbeat highlight to "Dancing Queen". She got everyone on stage moving and shimmying towards the half time finale only to be foiled by Witch Hazel who freezes the whole cast to move the blue palace clock forward. The Act II opening face-off between Fairy Lilac and her fairies in a lilac spot and Fairy Hazel's fairies in a green spot was very cleverly lit and they effectively sang "Trouble" by Pink to create the element of confrontation. The meeting of Rose and the Prince proved a lovely match. They both had vocal and acting strength which very much warranted their lead status and of course everyone was enraptured by their "A Million Dreams", sung when Rose is finally awakened from her "Golden Slumbers". A special mention has to go to the really atmospheric "Ways to be Wicked" chorus and dancers around the witch's caldron and to the dramatic dance to "No Good Deed" with the flowers and animals in the scary, thorny forest. The community singing was really well received and had the audience raising the roof with the Proclaimers' "I'm Gonna Be". The finale certainly had the 'WOW' factor too. When the curtain opened, there was an evident gasp at the stunning costume plot. Once again the lead dancer took centre stage for "Hold up a Light". The costumes of ruby, gold and white with rose pink were truly stunning! Hettie led the "Dancing Queen" reprise to an elated cast and audience. What a wonderful night of entertainment! Massive congratulations to all the cast, the working directors, stage crew and helpers who put this wonderful show together! Thank You.

Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society: Annie Jr

Directors: Douglas Russell, Nicola Watt; Musical Directors: Roger Brydon, Ross McGinn;
Choreographers: Rachel Campbell, Rosie Graham

For their first musical production KIYT (Kids Innerleithen Youth Theatre) could not have picked a better choice. Based on the ever popular version of the film, this one act musical follows the same story line and has all the well known characters and songs. For the show to succeed it requires a strong lead in the shape of Orphan Annie. Freya Wilson in the role was just perfect with a great voice especially in the big number "Tomorrow". She captured beautifully that initial tomboy character that gradually develops into the Annie loved and adopted by Oliver Warbucks. As the drunk manager of the orphanage Miss Hannigan (Lizzie Bell) was hilarious, making the most of the character. She worked well alongside Alex Paterson and Neve Scott as her brother Rooster and his girlfriend Lily, as they attempt to steal back Annie and claim the reward. As Oliver Warbucks, Thomas Brydon was in charge but gradually showed his softer side as he warmed to having Annie in his life. He was well supported by his secretary Grace Farrell well portrayed by Ava Church. The other orphans and all the varied minor roles were well played by the members of the large cast. They all sang and moved well and it was evident they were enjoying their time on stage. The simple set worked well and in particular I liked the colourful neon signs. The use of backing tracks, supplied by the rights holders, only helped to enhance what

was over all and excellent afternoon at the theatre. Innerleithen have to be congratulated for taking the steps a few years ago to set up a youth section and for helping to develop the next generation of performers that will ensure the club continues to thrive for many years to come. Amateur theatre in the town is in safe hands and has a very bright future.

Stuart McCue-Dick

Right Angle Theatre Company: Sleeping Beauty

Director & Musical Director: Derek Calder; Choreographers: Stuart Mitchell, Julie Smith

Good Fairy Lilac (Amanda Blacklock), Bad Witch Hazel (Tracy Borthwick), Muddles (Billy Rooney), King Cactus (Steve Hartley-Oliver), Queen Marigold (Julia Noble), Nurse Hettie Harpic (Jodie Millar), Fetch (Antony Wilson), Carry (Katie Gordon), Fairy Red (Shannon Mack), Fairy Yellow (Ruby Everett), Fairy Green (Caitlin Green), Fairy Blue (Katie Wilson), Young Princess Rose (Aimee Richardson), Prince Alexis (Stuart Mitchell) Princess Rose (Amy Thomson). The prologue of "Mixed Blessings" was well delivered by Good Fairy Lilac and Wicked Witch Hazel, both of whom are experienced and well loved performers in the company. Witch Hazel took the role at a week's notice when the original cast member fell ill. It has to be noted that she played a phenomenal role, and no one would ever have known it had not been rehearsed for months. Well done! The opening, scenically dressed was the upbeat "Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer" involving loads of lively movement, with a great piano and drum combo accompanying, culminating in the whole village coming together for a photo selfie by Fairy Lilac. Fun idea! Muddles never fell short in getting the audience involved and was a strong character throughout. Nurse Hettie's introduction with a vivacious rendition of "I Enjoy Being a Girl" from the old musical *Flower Drum Song* took me down memory lane. A strong, funny character, she took charge of the care of the new flatulent baby princess, which sent ripples of giggles through the huge audience of Scouts, Brownies and Boys' Brigade, as well as some of the adults too. Fetch and Carry delivered a very good "Post Haste" and were well cast in their roles, never missing a cue as a dynamic duo. The Rainbow Fairies were exceptionally well in tune with Fairy Lilac for "You Can Do Magic" and the cuteness of the White Fairy Troupe was adorable. The bairns always have the 'Awe!' factor. Our introduction to a 12 year old Rose was perfect and the young lady sang a heartwarming "Born With A Smile on Her Face". From one perfect Princess to a chaotic classroom with a superb bunch of "Revolting Children", was a real showstopper. The lesson shenanigans, with Muddles being the brunt of the nonsense, was well played out by Hettie, Muddles and chorus, ending in a "Revolting" reprise. Fabulous! The charismatic Prince Alexis had the vocal ability to match his personality. His "Follow That Dream" was excellent. The plethora of colourful celebration songs to make time fly concluded an exciting and ultimately dramatic first half of the show. The Act II opening highlight, "A Million Dreams" was beautifully sung by Rose. The excellent casting of Alexis and Rose made for a superbly comfortable couple on stage whose voices blended perfectly as they wowed the audience with "Somewhere Only We Know". Gorgeous! The travelling from garden to tower, with echoing treads was well executed, right up to the dramatic revelation of disguised witch Hazel and the final collapse of the Princess. As the palace partied on, oblivious to the plight of Rose, the "Beautiful Sunday" number had all the courtiers up for a good old slosh. At the revelation of the sleeping Rose, the beautiful rendition of "Hushabye Mountain" by Fairy Lilac, supported harmonically by Rainbow Fairies and company was heartwarming. The mini white fairies wowed the audience once again with their song and dance, "Wake Up You Sleepy Head", but Wicked Hazel was sitting in the side lines ready to create havoc with her minions in a fabulously dramatic "Evil Like Me", as she cooked up her next magic potion, only to be foiled again by Fairy Lilac. As the Princess and the palace dreamily slept, the UV light dance proved energetic and highly entertaining. In happy pantomime fashion Sleeping Beauty's Prince comes to the rescue for the awakening to rousing applause for their beautifully sung, harmonic duet, "Perfect". And so, to the perfect rousing finale: a celebration dance through the audience was aptly "Can't Stop the Feeling". Fetch and Carry did a fine job on The Border News to give everyone their well earned time to glam up for the big finale. "Oh! What a Night" was also aptly chosen to get the audience rapturously applauding and singing along. Dutifully, Santa put in an appearance for all the youngsters and led an upbeat "Santa Claus is Coming to Town". Well done, everyone!

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GUY VAESEN AND THE FOUNDING OF THE FLORIANS



THE FLORIANS

75 Dramatic Years 1944-2019

2019 sees the 75th anniversary of The Florians. The Inverness company has planned several commemorative events, including an open day in July encompassing memorabilia, speeches and short films of reminiscences by senior club members. The Provost of Inverness will unveil a commemorative plaque in the Florians Theatre.

Another very special guest that day will be Paul Vaesen, who has been tracked down by Hon Vice-President Trevor Nicol. Paul is the son of Guy Vaesen who was the driving force behind the establishment of the company in 1944. Guy was an extremely interesting character who became a close friend and associate of Harold Pinter. He joined the Royal Tank Corps during the war, but being unfit for overseas service was sent by the military to inspect NAAFI's in the North of Scotland. Guy put his time in Inverness to good use by forming the club and writing and directing its first production.

When the Florians had their 50th anniversary in 1994, Trevor found an article in The Inverness Courier from August 1944 which described the founding of a new drama club in Inverness to entertain the troops. The club's first production was *The Road That Beckons* by Guy Vaesen, and for most members by 1994 this was a completely unknown name. Trevor tried to obtain a copy of the play, but unfortunately the search proved fruitless.

Fast forward 25 years and with the 75th anniversary approaching, Trevor discovered a clipping in The Highland News from 1994 mentioning the play and its author. An internet search threw up an obituary of Guy from 2002 in The Independent. The obituary spoke at length about Guy's career in the theatre and his friendship with Harold Pinter and wife Vivien Merchant. It went on to say that Guy had subsequently become an artist and settled in Greece, which was where he died in August 2002.

However, the most amazing part of the obituary stated that when in the Highlands during the war he had: "...formed a group of amateur players, the Florians..." This statement seemed to indicate that the formation of the club had been important to him. The obituary had many interesting facts about Guy's career which had taken him from post-war stagehand in the Theatre Royal Stratford, to Birmingham Rep, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Scarborough. From 1957 to 1963 he had been resident director at the Connaught Theatre in Worthing, and his close friendship with the Pinters had led to them moving there in 1962. Pinter wrote *The Homecoming* at the house in Ambrose Place, a play Peter Hall regarded as his finest work. Guy worked for the BBC for some time and became Head of Drama at Radio 3.

Guy's early years at the Corporation had proved rather soul-destroying. The job of BBC script editor could be a mind-numbing existence, having to shatter aspiring authors' dreams by returning rejected scripts to them. Eventually seeking solace by joining the BBC Art Society proved to be a life changing decision and led to Guy's final career as an artist. His

work was to hang in some very illustrious homes such as those of Lady Antonia Fraser, Paul Eddington, Judi Dench, Vincent Price and of course, Harold Pinter.

Interestingly, the obituary mentioned that Guy had a son named Paul, and it was at this point that Trevor decided to locate him for the 75th anniversary. The prospect of Guy having left early photos of the Florians and perhaps the odd programme or even a dog-eared copy of *The Road that Beckons* was an intriguing one. Luckily Trevor tracked Paul down to a small village outside Eastbourne. He was delighted by the approach and readily agreed to be guest of honour at the open day. This is to be held on Saturday 13 July at the Florians Theatre when the general public will be welcome to enjoy the displays.

Unfortunately Guy left little in the way of memorabilia, but he did keep diaries, and Paul hopes to find some new and interesting facts about the origins of the Florians.

Attic Theatre: Peter Pan

Director: Emma Gibb; Musical Director: Craig McDermott; Choreographer: Sarah MacNay

Attic brought to the Tivoli a spectacular production of *Peter Pan*, complete with aerial antics by Peter, Tinkerbell, the Darling Children and even flying Mermaids! Megan Matheson-Adams was excellent as the eponymous Peter Pan whether in the softer moments with the Lost Boys or in the swash-buckling encounters with Captain Hook. Vikki Davidson as Wendy Darling was delightful as Peter's love interest and her motherly instincts resonated with many in the audience. Joel Anderson and Zak Leyni played the parts of her younger brothers (top-hatted John and diminutive Michael) well. Hannah Smith as Peter's Doc Martin booted fairy friend Tinkerbell was another excellent character encouraging the audience to cheer and boo when required. Tiana Mudkavi was a delightful Tiger Lily with a beautiful singing voice. Mikey Innes who, despite being devilishly handsome and having a good baritone singing voice, made a truly boo-able Captain Hook. Emily Maciver as his side-kick Smee was a lovely bouncy character who brought lots of laughter to the piece. Last but not least was Mike Taylor as the garrulous, Doric cook Dame Delia – a superb creature in a series of outrageous costumes – bringing gales of laughter at her every word. And could she fairly move in those peerie heels! Strong support was given by Matthew Walker (Mr Darling/Chief), Grace Hepburn (Mrs Darling) and Katie MacIver (canine nanny Nana). Singing and dancing to music from the likes of Abba and Dolly Parton the large chorus of Lost Boys, Pirates and Indians were note, word and step perfect. The set built by club members was bright and appropriate, especially in the blue-themed, multi-level nursery. The costumes designed and made by Penny Duffy and Ross Buchan were also bright and appropriate to each character. The 6-piece band gave excellent support, never overpowering the singers. Thank you, Attic Theatre, for a wonderful evening's entertainment.

Culter Theatre Club: Aladdin

Directors: Kerwin Robertson, Mary Somerville; Musical Director: Stuart Duncan; Choreographer: Susan Davis

This was a truly local panto with a script by two of the club members (who were also the directors) and full of references to local characters, places and events. Aladdin played by Matthew Bruce gave a good strong performance despite suffering from laryngitis. Miranda Andrews made a beautiful Princess Jasmin with a good singing voice. Colin Jones was imposingly evil as Abanazar, eliciting much booing from the audience. Paula Milne as the Genie of the Lamp was a strong character with a strong voice shown to its best in her rendition of "Friend Like Me". Young Erin Duncan made a delightful Genie of the Ring. Linda Hector and Sandra Bain, as Sergeant Ping and PC Pong respectively, were a wonderful comic pairing who had the audience hooting with laughter at every appearance. The star of the show without a doubt was Stuart McMains' Widow Twankey as she took to the stage in a series of outrageous dresses – strutting her stuff to numbers such as "Big Spender" and the Bay City Rollers' "Bye Bye Baby" and interacting cheekily with the audience. Strong support was given by Josh Clayton (Wishee Washee), Alex Busch (The Emperor), Barbara Paterson (Sweet Honey), Rachel Sansom (Wishee's feline pet) and Fiona Jones (a fleeting, visiting Doctor Who). The chorus singing and dancing throughout was very good but especially in the rockin' Christmas Medley finale. Stuart Duncan and his five piece band gave good support throughout but were never too obtrusive. Costuming was colourful and appropriate for all the characters. The set too was bright, even managing to fit a full laundry of washing machine, tumble drier and wringer on to the small stage, and the lighting added much to the atmosphere. Congratulations to all at Culter Theatre Group for an excellent evening's entertainment.

Elgin Amateur Dramatic Society: Puss in Boots

Director: Jimmy Cameron; Musical Director: Angus Hull; Choreographer: Kirsty Anderson

The hard-working and experienced cast in Elgin soon had the first night audience cheering and booing with gusto. With lots of well-known songs – from the cheery "Zippity-Do-Dah" opening number to the rockin' "Merry Christmas, Everybody's Having Fun" finale – and good choreography, the evening flew by. Kerry Peace and Andrew Sutherland, as Princess Esmerelda and Jack the Miller's stepson, were a good pairing and their duet "Just The Way You Are" was

delightful. Lindsay Knight as Queen Wendy was a Grande Dame of the old school, lording it over everyone but especially over her bumbling husband King Wally played by Sandy Dow. Much of the laughter in the show was engendered by Aidan Hyndman and Tiarnan Clark as Jasper and Jethro the Miller's sons in their hapless endeavours to kidnap the Princess for the Ogre. Ian Glover was a malevolent if colourful Grimgrab the Ogre (with green fat-suit and orange wig) and along with his assistant Fairy Pernicia, played by Lynne Ward, took every opportunity to goad the audience. Counteracting this evilness were the excellent Katy Rodway-Swanson, who had good stage presence as Puss in Boots and Naomi Bunyan as the delightful Fairy Priscilla. Strong support was given by Colin Smith (Bobbie, the Royal Page), Lee Whitley and Donna Ettles (Babs and Bette, Jasper and Jethro's girlfriends) and Ophelia Simms (Millie the Maid). Special mention must go to the trio of rabbits played as bovver-booted hard men by Kirsty Anderson, Janice Hyndman and Kim McIntyre – a nice twist which was greatly enjoyed by the audience. Chorus singing and movement were good. Costuming was bright and appropriate, as was the set. Congratulations all at EAD.

Islesburgh Drama Group: Puss in Boots

Director: Stanley Manson; Musical Director: Chris Horrix; Choreographer: Diane Legget

This was my first panto visit of the season and the furthest flung. The show was the perfect antidote to a stormy Shetland night, being full of warmth and fun! From the rousing opening chorus to the finale the full-house audience were in full-throated support of the hard-working cast. Donna Marie Leask as Jack, the Miller's Stepson, and Juliet Mullay as Princess Esmerelda were well matched as the young lovers. Martin Summers and David Smith as Jasper and Jethro, the Miller's sons, made a great comedy pairing, getting huge laughs from their antics as they tried to kidnap the Princess for the Ogre. Bob Skinley as green-skinned Grimgrab the Ogre and Lyn Anderson as his evil assistant Pernicia the Bad Fairy were truly boo-able and even managed to make their rendition of "Music of the Night" sound menacing! Always there to counteract their evilness were Kerry Sjoberg as Priscilla the Good Fairy and Mandy Phillips as the sleek, thigh-slapping Puss in Boots. Jennie Atkinson as the bossy, loquacious and sometimes scatter-brained Queen Wendy was excellent and was abetted in all the laughter engendered by Karl Ward as her imposing (but hen-pecked) husband King Wally struggling to get a word in! Strong support was given by Morag Mouat (Bobbie the Royal Page), Amy Melkevik and Charity Johnson (Babs and Betty, Jasper and Jethro's girlfriends), Joyce Williamson (Millie the Princess's maid) and Lois Phillips (Mime Puss, Puss's silent self). The chorus sang and moved well and the rabbit and butterfly speciality dance by the youngsters was delightful. The costuming was appropriate and colourful – especially the red and gold of the finale. The set was bright and cheerful with atmospheric lighting and special effects. The 3-piece band worked hard throughout the show giving great support to the cast. Well done everyone for a lovely evening's entertainment.

Kirkwall Amateur Operatic Society: Chicago

Director: Graham Macdonald; Musical Directors: Iain Campbell, Michael Bell, Caroline Paterson, Steven Flett
Choreographers: Jo Davis, Melanie Slater

This company did not have their troubles to seek when putting on this production – trouble finding an MD, a principal taking ill and having to be replaced a few weeks before opening night and one of the leading ladies badly spraining an ankle. But as the old adage goes "The show must go on" and so it did – brilliantly! The two vaudevillian villainesses Roxie Hart (the injured Kathleen Irving-Lewis) and Velma Kelly (Elaine Stewart, in her first principal role) were both excellent actresses and singers whether in their solo numbers – "Roxie" or Velma's "I Can't Do It Alone" – or in their duets such as "My Own Best Friend". Scott Gilmour as money-grabbing lawyer Billy Flynn was suitably sleazy and charming at the same time, with a good singing voice and nimble footwork as demonstrated in his renditions of "All I Care About" and "Razzle Dazzle". Michael Bell was truly believable as the down trodden Amos Hart – his rendition of "Mr Cellophane" was truly heart-rending. As well as being on stage Michael showed his versatility by being in the pit in charge of the conductor's baton for part of the performance! Kim Hamilton gave a very strong performance as Matron "Mama" Morton and I particularly liked her duet with Velma, "Class". Another strong performance was given by Glynis Tait as the reporter Mary Sunshine – the role she took on at just a few weeks' notice. Strong support was given by Bobby Flett (Fred Casely) and Dominic Buttifant (Sergeant Fogarty). Mention too must be made of the girls involved in the intricately choreographed "Cell Block Tango" – Nyree Gunn, Katrina Tait, Emma Laughton, Helen Newton and Fiona Fraser. The ensemble singing and movement were of a high standard. Good use was made of the brick-walled, split level set representing the forbidding jail-house. Costuming was excellent and in keeping with the characters. The orchestra coped well with the changes in conductor and gave excellent support to the singers. Congratulations to everyone at Kirkwall AOS for an excellent show!

Lyric Musical Society: Elf – The Musical

Director: Lynsey Craddock; Musical Director: Craig Pike; Choreographer: Laura Ross

From the quiet opening scene with Santa sitting in his favourite armchair to the dazzling silver and white tap-dancing finale this production was full of "sparklejollytwinklejingle"-ness and at the heart of every scene was the larger-than-life, exuberant Buddy the Elf. Gavin McKay as Buddy gave a tour-de-force performance with a wonderfully strong singing

voice, excellent dancing skills and perfect comic timing. Santa was played by Andrew Begg as to the manner born. Sophie Hamilton Pike as Jovie, Buddy's love interest, was beautiful and her tongue-in-cheek ballad "Never Fall In Love With An Elf" was a delight. Michael Barrie as Walter Hobbs – Buddy's (human) hard-nosed, workaholic Dad who eventually sees that family life is the most important thing – was perfect in the role, as was Rachael Watson as his wife Emily. Her duet "I'll Believe In You" with her young son Michael, played by the outstanding Archie MacLean, was really touching. Mention too must be made of Victoria Cowan as Hobbs's secretary Deb and Gavin Davidson as Macy's store manager; their comic talents added greatly to the humour of the piece. Strong support was given by Garry Watson (Mr Greenway), Stephen Reid (Matthews/Fake Santa) and Matthew Rose (Chadwick). The company singing and dancing was superb – even that of the 20 or so Santa suited men in the "Nobody Cares About Santa" number in Act III! The set, including a flying Santa Sleigh, depicted New York City life to a "T" with the lighting adding greatly to the atmosphere. The 15 piece orchestra, under the careful baton of Craig Pike, played Matthew Sklar's delightful score well and were sympathetic to the singers, never once overpowering them. The costumes were appropriate to the characters and period, their colourfulness adding greatly to the jolly feel of the show. Congratulations to everyone involved – you certainly deserved the standing ovation given!

MSD Productions: Christmas Concert

Director: Rhona Mitchell; Musical Directors: Ashley Forbes, Andrew Saunders

48 students and 4 former students of the Mitchell School of Drama took to the floor of the Acorn Centre to deliver a delightful mix of Christmas songs, carols, poems, monologues and sketches. Both acts opened with a medley by former students – Jordan Abberley-Nicoll (Act 1) and Scott Armstrong (Act 2) – and included numbers such as "We Need A Little Christmas", "I'll Be Home For Christmas" and "Mele Kalikimaka (Hawaiian Christmas Song)". The sketches told the story of the birth of Jesus with a modern and humorous twist. Starting with the pregnant Mary (Olivia Watt) and Joseph (Euan Banks) attending a meeting with a relationship counsellor (Emily Walker) as Mary tries to convince Joseph of the immaculate conception. Then in "Waiting Up" Melchior (Josh Simpson) tries to explain to his furious wife (Imogen Watt) that he is late home because he and his two pals Caspar and Balthazar have been looking at a star and have decided to follow it – she was not impressed! "Analysis" told how the angels appeared to three Doric shepherds (Eleanor Harper, Alex Kelman, Mikey Nicoll) as they were interviewed for a TV report with so called experts adding their opinion. Then a beautifully delivered monologue by Rosalind Watt as the Innkeeper's Wife telling the story of the birth of the babe in the stable. "Three Wise Dudes" told of Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar (Josh Simpson, Ben McWilliam and Benjamin Gibbs) as they search for the infant King and those they met along the way – Passer-by, Prime Minister, Receptionist, Matron, Girl and Helper at a shelter for the homeless. "In the Stable" showed Mary, Joseph and the Baby in the stable being photographed for a celebrity magazine – showing how the birth would be treated today! There were also three wonderful sketches by the Musical Theatre class "In the Corridor", "Choir Practice 1" and "Choir Practice 2" where a group of rebellious children decide to put their own versions of two well-known carols "The Angel Gabriel" and "In The Bleak Midwinter" into the school concert much to the frustration of their music master (played by Andrew Saunders) – his attempts at hip-hop were hilarious. Among the other highlights for me was a wonderful solo by the super, strong-voiced Carys Taylor and the solo by classical pianist Sienna Lee. The evening was rounded off with the full cast on stage for a heart wrenching version of "White Christmas". Well done – each and every one of you was a Christmas star!

Tain Pantomime Group: Rapunzel

Directors: Alan Nimmons, Barbara Moore; Musical Director: Sharon Macleod

With 11 principals and a chorus of 65 schoolchildren this must have been the largest cast of any pantomime I have seen. The relatively small stage seemed overcrowded when everyone was onstage for the company numbers and so movement was limited but it was good to see the youngsters taking part and enjoying the experience. Prince Fredrick was well played by Lucy Dixon as a laidback, shades wearing cool dude with lots of attitude – a nice twist on the Principal Boy role. Claire Daniels as Rapunzel had good stage presence and a beautiful strong singing voice. Paco Morera as Dame Beatrix Bouffant (call me "Trixie") was a truly larger-than-life character whose problems with her wigs, despite being the owner of the local hairdressing salon, had the audience in stitches. Gothel the Evil Witch who had kidnapped the baby Rapunzel and kept her held in a tower for 18 years, was played by Roslyn Oliver Jones and was aided by her two gormless assistants, Curly and Bob, played by Cieran Macleod and Lisa Stewart respectively. The antics of this pair of daft laddies had the audience hooting with laughter. Trying to counteract Gothel's evil ways was Dawn Gregory as the only recently qualified Fairy Flora, delivering perfectly her lines in rhyme. Strong support was given by Martin MacKenzie (Frankie the Prince's Valet), John Gunn (King Geoffrey), Jane Milne (Queen Gertrude) and Tracy Chatten (Captain of the Guard and the Dame's love interest). Music was in the main modern, played solely by Sharon Macleod on the piano. Principal costumes were bright and appropriate to the characters, as was the set. Well done everyone – your hard work was certainly appreciated by the full-house audience!

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Ury Players: Robin Hood

Director: Heather Adams Officer; Choreographer: Georgia Lanning

Written and directed by club stalwart Heather Adams Officer this version of *Robin Hood* was full of fun, good music and excellent choreography from the opening chorus of “Men in Tights” through “You Can’t Stop The Beat” to what has become the traditional finale “Reach”. Katie Ironside was a traditional thigh-slapping principal boy and was well matched by Abbey Patterson as a spirited Maid Marion. Heather Adams Officer as the blue-suited Minstrel did well as narrator of the piece keeping the audience and the cast on track. Murray Lawson, in his first principal role, made a handsome – if dim-witted – Little John, a fact which did not go unnoticed by Garry Brindley’s dame Nursie. His lecherous looks and actions, along with his rendition of “Man! I Feel Like A Woman”, had the audience in stitches. Tim Roberts was striking as the man in red Will Scarlett and Lewis Maitland, again in his first principal role, was a genial Friar Tuck. Andrew Dart as the Sherriff of Nottingham, the villain of the piece, had the audience booing and hissing well at his dastardly attempts to capture Robin and then marry Marion. In these endeavours he was assisted – or should that be hindered – by Liz Forrest’s Quincey Quiver, whose facial expressions were a delight! Strong support was given by Heather Stewart (Robbed Man), Joanna Murray (Peddler) and Peter Esson (King Richard). The highlight of the show for me, and for the rest of audience as attested by their reaction, was the superb rendition of “Jobs (If I Were Not In Pantomime)” by the Merry Men, Nursie and Quincey, a combination of witty lyrics and immaculate comic timing – how one of them didn’t end up knocked over or with a black eye is a miracle! Costuming was bright and appropriate filling the stage with colour. The set, built by company members, was relatively simple but very effective and the lighting added much to the atmosphere. Congratulations to all at the Ury Players for once again bringing colour and laughter to the local community at this cold and dark time of year!

DISTRICT No 10: Angus & Kincardine

Arbroath Amateur Musical Society: Sweeney Todd

Director: Alan Christison; Musical Director: Richard Allan; Choreographer: Franky Anderson

This is not a show often performed because of its demanding nature, so it was much anticipated. Immediately the set and the well disciplined company set the murky scene of nineteenth century London. Brian Boardman in the title role is totally in command throughout, tackling the part with great expertise. Playing opposite him, Heidi Cathro, as the failed pie shop owner Mrs Lovett, gives an all round accomplished performance, her character enabling Todd to exact his revenge on the society that unjustly separated him from his lovely wife and child. Distraught to learn of his wife’s suicide and that his teenage daughter, Johanna, is now being raised by Judge Turpin, the man who framed Todd and ravaged his wife, the barber begins his murdering spree with Mrs Lovett using the bodies to make her “amazing” pies. Anthony Hope, portrayed sincerely and nicely sung by Jonathon Milne, is the sailor friend of Todd’s who unknowingly falls for the innocent Johanna. Shannon Heenan tackles the purity of this part well, singing just as sweetly. Judge Turpin (performed imposingly by Fin MacDonald) discovers the lovers’ pact to marry and commits Johanna to an asylum. Luckily her lover flies to her rescue. Meantime shop assistant, Tobias Ragg, endearing himself to Mrs Lovett and the audience with a superb rendering of “Not While I’m Around”, discovers their dark secret. Ruaridh Mathieson brings palpable energy to this part, playing it to perfection. Judge Turpin’s associate Beadle Bamford’s suspicions make him another obvious victim. Ross McKenzie plays and sings this role splendidly. Finally Todd exacts his revenge on the judge setting in place his final demise. For those who haven’t seen it, I won’t reveal the surprising, shocking ending. Smaller but notable performances by Franky Anderson bringing panache to the role of Adolfo Pirelli and Marion Allan supplying humour and pathos as the beggar woman enhance the production. Other smaller parts were all well played. Indeed the whole production exuded confidence and conviction from the hard working, proficient band to the memorable chorus singing, to the excellent production team. Congratulations to all involved. You killed it, guys!!!! (Sorry for the pun!!!)

Carnoustie Theatre Club: Aladdin A Genie-us Panto

Director: Linzy Evatt; Assistant Director: Carolyn Cheape; Musical Director: Paul Coffield;
Choreographers: Kim Brymer, Cerys Fitzgerald, Gill Duncan, Sarah Oliphant

It’s always a joy to see a packed auditorium and this one was buzzing with excitement. And it wasn’t to disappoint. A colourful set with vibrant costumes coupled with an athletic, cleverly choreographed opening dance grabbed the audience’s attention. There’s no need to explain the storyline here – the well rounded characters did that job effectively. Kim Brymer as a convincing Aladdin and Emily Taylor as vivacious Princess Jasmine were perfectly matched. A laid back but very entertaining Widow Twankey was played by a slimline Chris Duke. The kids loved Widow Twankey’s son and sidekick, a bubbly Wishee Washee (Charlie Ferrier). And the character they loved to hate, Abanazar (George Doherty) gave a truly evil performance. The entrance of cops, Chop (Louise Selfridge-Doig) and Suey (John McSkimming), to the music of Gangnam Style made us smile and they certainly endeared themselves to the audience. Sarah Oliphant brought sincerity to the part of Suki while Muriel Gordon played a suitably regal Empress Ming. Glamour came in the form of Audrey Doherty as Spirit of the Ring. And let’s not forget the innovative addition of Shirley The

Abominable Snowman (Dave Soutar). However, star performance of the evening would have to be Grant Roach's imaginative portrayal of the Genie Of The Lamp. Praise also to the very inventive Washomatic laundry scene. Add to this a hard working cast with rousing songs and effective choreography and you have the recipe for an entertaining evening. Lastly, congratulations to an excellent wardrobe team for fabulous costumes throughout and especially the finale.

Combined Productions: Beauty And The Beast

Director: Graeme Baird; Musical Director: Ron Stewart; Choreographers: Laura Ferguson, Emma Ferguson

Set in a village of Le Marymuir, a small French hamlet lying between Le Marykirk and Le Kirriemuir, we were introduced to the lives of Beauty and her father Dr Panache (played with dignity by Douglas Johnston), as they became embroiled in the destiny of The Beast. Lively choreography and chorus singing set the pace. But the fun really began with a parade of comedy characters. Ali Niven as Fat Franc, uselessly servant to the local Countess, had the audience on "his" side from the start. And when Dame Dora (Brian Mathieson) made "her" appearance, she was soon an audience favourite. Successful improvisation is definitely one of Brian's talents. Add to that the Loopy Louis ('identical' twins sharing a brain), played engagingly by Alix Morland and a very cute Harrison Cairney, and the nonsense really took hold. Getting to know Belle (a very talented Catie Mathieson) was a delight, as she gave us an amazingly mature rendering of "Someone To Watch Over Me". That someone was not slimy Danton however, played to hilarious effect by Ross Robertson. His Countess mother (Teresa Warden) had just the right amount of irritation with her cowardly son. Millar Young gave a strong performance as both The Prince and The Beast while Kirsty Dunoon handled herself well in the smaller role of Sylvie. A highlight of the show was the musical number "If I Did Not Work For The Prince" which involved all the characters and took the fun up a notch. Audience participation was rife throughout and all the characters were greeted warmly by the Brechin audience. A hilarious time was had by all.

Kirriemuir Panto Group: Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood

Director & Musical Director: Thomas Baxter; Assistant Director: Paula Milne;
Choreographers: Rebecca Hardie, Leah Robertson

A colourful and atmospheric castle set welcomed the audience to this lavish production. Ellen Brooks as Spirit of Sherwood set the scene very sweetly while in contrast Serena Cyanide played vividly by Paula Milne was obviously the inspiration for the phrase "poisoned tongue". Rob Hardman was a suitably wicked Sheriff of Nottingham while the hero of the hour Robin Hood performed with thigh-slapping aplomb by Nikki O'Connor was matched perfectly with Jessica Farrell as a striking Maid Marion. Comedy was served in spadefuls by accomplished "dame" Neil Stewart as Nellie Noggins, Kris McWalter as Mr Hookline and his partner in fun, James Dobbie as Mr Sinkler. And who could forget Jim Walker as a convincing Friar Tuck? Maddie Farquhar as Olive Oddbody and Andrew Taylor as Much, The Miller's Son worked well keeping the storyline moving. The Babes, Rowan and Matilda, were performed delightfully by Fergus Durston and Issy Ramsey. An energetic chorus and the dancers provided some memorable moments especially Baggy Trousers. Other smaller parts were performed competently by Dawn Stephen, Sandrine Vorburger, John Marshall and Dave Buchan. This fast paced very visual production had lots of action, colourful characters and unusual songs which all added up to an entertaining evening.

Spotlights Community Youth Theatre: The Suitcase Kid and Musicville

Director: Marley Hunter; Musical Director: Colin Grant; Choreographer: Louise Cumming

This was an adventurous double bill for this young company with both productions being new to us. The first was *The Suitcase Kid*, a new children's play written by popular children's author Jacqueline Wilson, adapted by Vicky Ireland. With a cast of 7, doubling up on roles, it was an ambitious production. It told the story of Andy, who, after the separation of her parents has to split her week between her mum and dad and their new families. With a lot of dialogue to learn, all the cast worked hard but especially the lead played by Kaya Eggleton-Hunter (who spoke very clearly) although a problem with sound and the double role playing made it a little confusing for the audience. Andy's fantasy sequences involving her toy rabbit coming to life brought fun, dance, music and a touch of charm to the action. *Musicville* is a delightful new children's musical and a perfect showcase for the cast of 27. Living in a mythical land of song, Maiden Melody and Radical Rhythm set out on an adventure to save their town from the Sorcerer of Silence who has poisoned the water, depriving the inhabitants of their voices. Ellie Bruce as Maiden sang sweetly and looked the part. Radical was played with clarity and good emphasis by Demi Russo, while Gemma Carnegie's portrayal of the Sorcerer of Silence was commanding. There followed some charming moments and performances (special mention for Cali Barclay) when we met the inhabitants of "The Castle of Composition", "The Desert Of Doo-wap", "The Ocean Of Opera" and "The Terrible Terrain of Tango". This gave the rest of the cast a chance to dance with simple but effective choreography and sing enthusiastically the catchy songs. Well done everyone!

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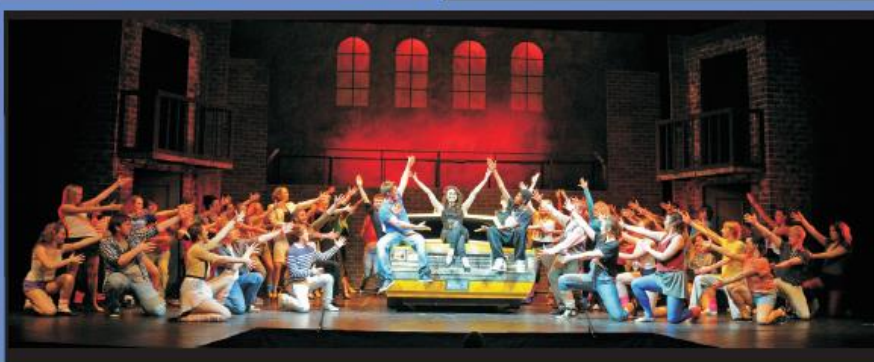
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Dumfries Musical Theatre Company: The Best Thing About Memories ...Is Making Them

Director: Roy Stairmand; Musical Director: Christopher Watt; Choreographer: Amy McCreddie

The curiosity of two elderly ladies crashing the opening of the show injected a comical touch to the proceedings. Muriel and Barbara's visit (on the wrong night) certainly awakened the audience, who were never going to be disappointed. A well recognised *Greatest Showman* number, "From Now On", was well placed and the harmonic rendition opened the company chorus perfectly. "Let it Go" from *Frozen* by Erin Craighead certainly had the wow factor! From her high step, the new house lighting was very cleverly choreographed to follow her every hand and arm movement. Her outstanding vocals were the first of many highlights in the show along with her hilarious rendition of the *Forbidden Broadway* "On My Phone". Superb! Jeanette Davidson treated us to a beautiful rendition of "Tonight" from one of my favourite musicals *West Side Story* and the real belter of a song "Blow Gabriel Blow" was easy pickings for the powerful and charismatic Laura Whitlaw, supported by the company. The well known number "Razzle Dazzle" was certainly that, as Neil Webster and the dancers strutted their stuff and "Money, Money, Money" added real value to the programme, performed by Neil Carruthers and Lindsay Nurney, the latter also soloing in "I Don't Know How to Love Him". "Hakuna Matata" from *The Lion King* and numbers from *Les Misérables*, "Castle on a Cloud", "Drink With Me" and "At the End of The Day" were all excellently delivered, with the latter being dramatically and dynamically choreographed for the whole company. In my opinion, it was possibly the better number for the Act I finale than "Jellicle Cats". *The Book of Mormon* was superbly presented. Well done, guys. The next DMTC show, *The Sound of Music*, was well covered by very competent members but it would be unfair to comment on the soloists in case the auditions don't go their way. It was lovely to hear "I'm Getting Married in the Morning" from a very well loved stalwart in the *My Fair Lady* sequence. The massively expressive "Just You Wait, 'Enry Higgins" was superb, not forgetting a classic "Ascot Gavotte" chorus. The "Funny Talent Skit" was outrageously brilliant, with everyone giving their own spin on their character and hilariously drawing in the audience with their clever script and interaction. Innovative! There were very lovely renditions from *Gigi*, *Chess* and *Mamma Mia*, creating memorable performances. The artistic staging and lighting enhanced the drama throughout the evening. The *Mary Poppins* sequence was without doubt a real crowd pleaser, with "Feed the Birds" being a beautiful and mesmerising solo and "Let's Go Fly a Kite" a rousing chorus. The *Forbidden Broadway* "Supercali" also had the audience in stitches. Excellent! This was a very well constructed 'Trip Down Memory Lane'. DMTC should be so proud of their wonderful night of entertainment. Thank you, everyone.

Deborah Lyons

The Fullarton (Castle Douglas) Ltd: Snow White

Director: Janet Scott; Choreographer: Lauren Little

I was delighted to be invited to this iconic show presented by The Fullarton Company. Over the years they have always presented a super Christmas period offering and this year was no exception. The mix of experienced principals and youth worked well and it was nice to see a good range of cast members. The company was as usual full of enthusiasm which didn't slacken from curtain up to finale. The action on stage was excellently complemented by the fixed set (I liked the thistles) and lighting effects. Scene changes were slick and with the simple but effective setting worked well. Joyce Reekie played Queen Verruca with gusto and deserved every boo and hiss she got from the audience. Her poor put upon husband King Pimpleheid was well put upon and Ian Gordon played this role very well indeed. The Carbunkle trio of Clarty (Colin Wilson, Idris Dean, and Alison Murdoch) had the audience in fits. They were a very funny part of this production. Also adding to the laughter were Mincy McSporran (Aidan Whan), Tumshie McTavish (Liz Black), Senga the Sook (Meghan Whalen). They as were all of the cast very funny. Pantomime is not an easy performance to do and they all carried out their roles superbly well. The good fairy, although a learner Flip Flop the Fairy suitably nervous and not confident, was played well by Tyler Gilmour and the Bad Wizard, Winkpicker got his comeuppance at her hands. Gavin Millar looked the part as the "King" Elvis. Snow White was delightfully played by Megan McLeary and it is great to have seen her grow in stature in this company. Her love interest played by Eden Brown was also as good. They made a handsome couple. The parts of the Gnomes were all excellent and as with everyone else on stage it was evident they were all enjoying what they were doing. No pantomime would be complete without the chorus and this well rehearsed and excellently choreographed troupe did what they did very well indeed. All in all an excellent performance well played. Thank you once again.

Note to Marketing Managers:

FREE PUBLICITY!!!

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

Grease

The Lyric Club
King's Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 2 Saturday 6 April 2019 (Matinees on Wednesday, Friday & Saturday)

Camp Rock The Musical

Monklands Light Opera
Sir John Wilson Town Hall, Airdrie
Thursday 4 to Friday 5 April 2019

Barnum

Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions
Linlithgow Academy Theatre, Linlithgow
Monday 8 to Saturday 13 April 2019

Anything Goes

Falkirk Operatic Society
Falkirk Town Hall
Tuesday 9 Saturday 13 April 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Dead Guilty

The Guild of Players
Theatre Royal, Dumfries
Wednesday 10 to Saturday 13 April 2019

Blitz!

Musselburgh Amateur Musical Association
Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh
Thursday 11 to Saturday 13 April 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Friday Night is Music Night

Runway Theatre Company
Clincarthill Parish Church, Glasgow
Friday 12 April 2019

The Sound of Music

Act 1 Youth
Hawick Town Hall
Monday 15 to Saturday 20 April 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Sweet Charity

Edinburgh Music Theatre Company Ltd
Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh
Tuesday 16 to Saturday 20 April 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Take A Bow

Dalziel High School FP Easter Egg Club
Motherwell Concert Hall
Wednesday 24 to Friday 26 April 2019

Cats

The Pantheon Club
King's Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 30 April to Saturday 4 May 2019

Legally Blonde – The Musical

Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group
Johnstone Town Hall
Wednesday 1 to Saturday 4 May 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Chicago

Kelty Musical Association
Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline
Wednesday 1 to Saturday 4 May 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Evita

Larbert Amateur Operatic Society
Dobbie Hall, Larbert
Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 May 2019

Barnum

Downfield Musical Society
Whitehall Theatre, Dundee
Wednesday 8 to Saturday 11 May 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

The Music Man

Runway Theatre Company
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Tuesday 14 to Saturday 18 May 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Made in Dagenham

The Livingston Players
Howden Park Centre, Livingston
Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 May 2019

Avenue Q

Eastwood Entertainers
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 May 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Verdi's Macbeth

Tayside Opera
Birnam Arts, Dunkeld
Thursday 23 May 2019

Verdi's Macbeth

Tayside Opera
Brechin City Hall
Friday 24 May 2019

Evita

Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association
The Lochgelly Centre
Wednesday 29 May to Saturday 1 June 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Verdi's Macbeth

Tayside Opera
The Space, Dundee
Thursday 30 May to Saturday 1 June 2019

Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (Youth Group Production)

Harlequin – Eastwood Theatre For Youth
Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow
Wednesday 5 to Saturday 8 June 2019 (Matinee on Saturday)

Evita

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

The Odd Couple (Female Version)

Monifieth Amateur Dramatics
Monifeith Theatre
Thursday 20 to Saturday 22 June 2019
Thursday 27 to Saturday 29 June 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

And Then There Were None

Monifieth Amateur Dramatics
Monifeith Theatre
Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 September 2019
Thursday 26 to Saturday 28 September 2019

Honk Jnr & My Son Pinocchio

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

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)

Jesus Christ Superstar

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

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)

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
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)

Copacabana

Big Bad Wolf Children's Theatre Company
Falkirk Town Hall
Tuesday 4 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)

9 to 5 – The Musical

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

West Side Story

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

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National Operatic and Dramatic Association

15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

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Registered charity number 254640 Registered company number 241572 Registered in England and Wales at the above address

Patron: The Lord Lloyd Webber





NODA MEMBER BENEFITS

What do you receive for your NODA society membership?

★ Members' magazine NODA Today ★ Regional news and updates from HQ

Access to members' area of website

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

Advice and services

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

Regional support

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

Training

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

Awards

- ★ National awards ceremony
- ★ Poster and programme competition

Discounts

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

Call: 01733 374 790 or email: info@noda.org.uk

 National Operatic Dramatic Association  @NODAtweets

Join at noda.org.uk

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As inspired by amateur theatre

Supporting amateur theatre in times of need...

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“ Procedure was swift, simple and effective - pleasantly surprised ”

“ This is the first claim we have had over many years and the staff were most helpful. We will remain with Lloyd & Whyte and recommend them to other drama groups. ”

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