

NOD.A SE
Celebration of
2019

ACCOLADES OF EXCELLENCE





Accolades of Excellence
2019



Accolades of Excellence for 2019

Selected by each Regional Rep from the shows they have seen and reported on.

Each certificate is available in the South East section of the NODA website ready to be downloaded. Actual certificates will be delivered when practicable.



District 1 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Brighton Theatre Group	Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
Play	Henfield Theatre Company	One Man Two Guvnors
Play	Cuckfield Dramatic Society	Stepping Out

District 1 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Mark Hall – Regional Rep District :

Musical:

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang -Brighton Theatre Group are one of Brighton's long-standing companies and have a reputation for putting on an excellent show. This was no exception. In fact, you would be forgiven for stepping out of the Theatre Royal in Brighton and taking a moment to realise you're not in London's West End. Michael Burnie's direction is natural and allows the script to move along at a fast pace.

The creative team are to be praised for their inconspicuous scene changes, clever use of projection and a sound balance that was flawless. Outstanding choreography in a variety of styles.

What a cast! From a fabulous ensemble to the well behaved (and well received) canines, it was clear, everyone on stage deserved to be there.

This was an outstanding production and every single person involved should be proud. The standing ovation received during the bows was certainly warranted. This really was truly scrumptious.

Play:

With a small cast of 10 principal roles and no ensemble, there is no place to hide for the performers and each needed to bring their best to keep the audience engaged for the duration. Not only did this talented cast achieve exactly that, their claim of not being able to differentiate the "real" tap dancers from the "never tapped before" was also correct. The final number was perfectly in time.

It is a true testament to the cast and the creative team to achieve such chemistry and for each individual performance to be of such a high standard.

But take nothing away from a hilariously funny production which was very well executed and thoroughly entertaining. It is clear that the cast thoroughly enjoyed themselves and I did also.



District 2 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	LOS Musical Theatre	Grease
Play	The Haven Players	The 39 Steps
Pantomime	Seaford Musical Theatre	Peter Pan The Pantomime

District 2 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Brenda Gower– Regional Rep District 2 :

Musical:

Grease - LOS (Lewes) - A show that was definitely not to be missed! A great deal of highly watchable theatre brought to us by this talented cast, not forgetting all the excellent backstage work.

Play:

The 39 Steps - The Haven Players - The black box version worked so well. All in the cast used their acting skills to the utmost and must be congratulated for their energy and ability to keep us all extremely entertained. Excellent backstage work that was so important to this innovative production.

Pantomime:

Peter Pan the Pantomime - Seaford Musical Theatre - This pantomime had class. The whole cast used their acting abilities to the utmost and all concerned in the whole production are to be congratulated in bringing this lovely story told with verve to Seaford.



District 3 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Battle Light Opera Group	Fiddler on the Roof
Musical	Opera South East	La Traviata
Play	Rye Players	The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomens Guild DS Production of Macbeth
Play	Fairlight Players	Humble Boy
Pantomime	The Benenden Players	King Arthur

District 3 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Anne Lawson – Regional Rep District 3:

Musical:

Battle's 'Fiddler On The Roof' – an evening of great music between the lines of the poignant script this production in the round truly included the audience in the action. With an amazing twinkle Tevye spoke to us creating an atmosphere of melancholy but with humour too. An extremely well cast of strong characters, with beautiful harmony and wonderful costumes. Chorus movement so well timed kept the continuity flowing. Excellent throughout.

Opera SE 'La Traviata' – A beautifully produced piece marking the hard-working group's 39th year. With visionary Fraser Grant at the helm and Ken Roberts with his sonorous orchestra and elegant movement created by Sophia LeFevre this timeless piece of opera came alive. With fine singing from both the principals and the ensemble combined with the simple sets and elegant costuming this production was a real treat.

Drama:

Welcome back to the NODA fold of the newly re-launched Rye Players who chose this funny but complicated script based on the Scottish play - a play that goes so wrong and the challenges to get it right. Under the direction of Pat Driver the whole cast gave first class performances with colourful, very Scottish costume right down to a tartan shopping bag! Splendid scenery with a stage crew working wonders with the timing of organised chaos. A fabulously funny evenings' entertainment.

Fairlight 'Humble Boy' – Bees, there are over 250 different types! The cast of six worked well as a team with in-depth appreciation of their characters. The beautiful garden graced the stage with numerous authentic props including a very special significant blooming red rose. The lead stereotype being reversed and paralleled with the social structure of the beehive – the Queen being the prominent being! A first-class production.

Pantomime:

Benenden 'Arthur' – A true family panto with the husband and wife collaboration from the Beveridges. Colourful, imaginative, great effects, all enhanced a very funny and clever script. The young dance troupe danced well and, together with the live music, created a production full of atmosphere. A good feel local community effort – pure escapism.

Congratulations to all societies within District 3 for their wonderful productions.



District 5 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Three Towns Theatre Company	Wind in the Willows
Musical	Maidstone Amateur Dramatic Society	Oliver
Play	The Lindley Players	Heroes
Play	The Lindley Players	Scaramouche Jones
Pantomime	West Wickham Pantomime Society	Aladdin

District 5 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Gordon Harris – Regional Rep District 5 :

Page 1

Musical:

Three Towns-Wind In the Willows - Who needs the Palladium when you have The Wind in the Willows at The Brooke Theatre Chatham. Of course the Palladium has the technical ability to do anything, remote control boats and cars, where TTTC use their feet !!!...The stage set and props get top billing for me, they were so innovative and superb. Costumes were also well thought through: colourful, the toning of colours gave all the characters a sense of being and gave the whole show a happy feeling – congratulations. The productions team each made an invaluable contribution their knowledge and professionalism shone through.-With 18 main parts in this WITW forgive me if I don't mention you all. Mr Toad: a rotund Tony Harold led this cast, was perfect - this is your best role yet....!!! Ratty - Gwyneth Loft, your characterization was top notch, Mole played by Aidan Loft gave us a vulnerability, as only mole should have...well done Aidan. Mr Badger - Andy Hollidge gave us a powerful performance, both in acting and in song. This WITW was a joy to watch and the camaraderie showed! Well-done TTTC.

Maidstone ADS-Oliver - Oliver! opened in the West End in 1960 when Lionel Bart was the Lloyd Webber of the day. MAOS' production was directed by Tony Cassidy. Tony kept this very close to the original and it hasn't dated at all, his professionalism at moving a large cast, along with choreographer Katy Russel gave us a good, well balanced show. John Mills' musical direction and orchestra is superb and the right balance, perfect! All the backstage crew are to be congratulated on coping with the myriad of scene changes with all the various technical aspects of lighting and sound. The whole cast was so well balanced under the direction of Tony Cassidy and John Mills who created a really good all-round show. The set of children created a good all-round sound and were thoroughly immersed in what they were doing. Other than Fagin, I always think of Oliver as a show of pairs. Mr Bumble and Widow Corney gave us perfect timing and had us tittering at their antics. Mr and Mrs Sowerberry gave us maturity and class, both in acting and singing. Nancy and Bill Sykes were a solid team and gave us solid performances. I particularly liked 'As long as he needs me'. Fagin gave us a master class in how to get everything right in characterisation, acting, singing, costume and props. His performance was outstanding. An excellent production.

District 5 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Gordon Harris – Regional Rep District 5 :

Page 2

Drama:

Originally these two plays shared one accolade and then two were given to District5.....

The Lindley Players-Scaramouche Jones - It was a pleasure to witness a master class of a performance by Geoff Dale as Scaramouche, in this solo play of that name. He had fashioned his alter-ego's, sad and tired, centenarian character perfectly. We were drawn into the tale of this white-faced clown's life, and the episodes that had added the layers of white grease paint to his 'traditional' white face.

The Lindley Players- Heroes - Take three older actors Glyn Rogers (Gustave) Roy Drinkwater (Henri) and John McCrae (Philippe) give them something to get their teeth into and you have excellence. These three actors were the best I have seen in years, perfect timing, perfect acting, and their command of their characters was sublime.

Pantomime:

West Wickham- Alladin - It always gives me pleasure to visit West Wickham Pantomime Society; I know I will be entertained. This production did not fail. Directors James and Mike Simpson, took this script and made it come to life and their direction made this Aladdin entertaining. The well-crafted set and the blasts of magnificent colour from the costumes create a suitable backdrop for this talented team. Perfect!

This Aladdin came to life with well choreographed numbers, a good team of principals who worked very well together. All in all this Aladdin is a splendid evening's entertainment – set, costumes, cast and a magic carpet – what more could you want. Super evening!



District 6 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Margate Operatic Society	Cats
Play	University of Kent Players	Bothered & Bewildered
Pantomime	Village People	Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs

District 6 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Cheryl Marksford – Regional Rep District 6 :

Musical:

Cats - I was blown away by this production. I laughed, I cried and I laughed again. I forgot I was in the theatre and was captivated fully by the music and dancing. Words cannot describe how magical this theatrical experience was.

Drama:

Bothered and Bewildered - This was one of the most poignant plays I have seen in a long time. The company tackled the subject matter of Alzheimers with tact and maturity as well as the needed dash of humour bringing the best out of both the play and the performers

Pantomime:

Snow White - This production was everything I wanted in a panto. Audience participation, a cast of all ages, bright costumes, great music and full of fun. But most importantly you could tell it was a real community affair and that is what made it extra special.



District 7 Accolades of Excellence

Play	Trinity Theatre Club	The Man Who Came to Dinner
Musical	LAMPS	Musicality Take 2
Musical	Sevenoaks Players	Jesus Christ Superstar

District 7 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Doreen Grierson – Regional Rep District 7 :

Musical:

SEVENOAKS PAYERS – JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

“ This rock opera is sung through with no dialogue, heavily reliant on strong vocals and powerful performances. Each and everyone of the cast and chorus made their moments on stage unforgettable.”

PLAY:

TRINITY THEATRE CLUB – THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER

“ A very talented cast who were able to take on multiple roles and make each one individual. A well-performed, well-staged production.”

COMPILATION SHOW:

LAMPS – MUSICALITY TAKE 2

“ This production was jam packed with fantastic songs from at least 45 musicals, which absolutely thrilled the audience. Choreography was inspired and the singing both from the soloists and chorus was mesmerizing.”



District 9 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	BROS	Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
Musical	COS Musical Theatre	Shrek The Musical
Play	Lancing Players	Blood Brothers/The Importance of Being Earnest
Play	Walberton Players	The Drunkard or Down With The Demon Drink
Pantomime	Littlehampton Musical Comedy Society	Goldilocks & the Three Bears

District 9 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Jose Harrison – Regional Rep District 9 :

Page 1

Musical:

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang – This BROS production was outstanding and I would have been very happy to have seen it twice but it was a complete sell out. The whole of the creative team are to be congratulated on reaching such a high standard.

With a cast of so many it wouldn't be sensible to try to mention them all by name but I can assure you that everyone appeared to be giving this show their all. The well-balanced line-up of principals, the Ensemble and the delightful team of children all helped to make this an outstanding production. My congratulations to everyone.

This version of **Shrek by COS** was set traditionally with cleverly designed costumes across the entire cast. Although there was an abundance of pantomime characters in the production there was never a moment when this show became pantomime orientated, the story line and the many musical numbers being the most important part of the production. A special mention has to go to the costume and make-up department for creating fantastic characters that stood out from the very beginning. There were too many characters to mention them all by name but this clever script allows each person their own chance to shine. The rat sequence was great fun and well performed, the dragon was spectacular and very well handled and the dancers and ensemble all sang and performed well. What a great show. I loved every minute of it.

Play:

I could not decide between Lancing Players ply Blood Brothers and The Importance of Being Earnest. The direction of the Blood Brothers was first rate, the story moved at a good pace and everyone appeared to have a good understanding of their role. I was impressed with the staging, the less is more approach worked perfectly, the cast made full use of the acting area and the simple costumes were worn well by all members of the cast. Minimal props and furniture on stage were good and the long chunks of dialogue were made interesting by characters changing position and really showing intense emotion. This was an enjoyable story and an excellent demonstration of a great favourite. Their small audience certainly appreciated the whole show; Well done to everyone concerned.

Oscar Wilde was a brilliant author and he would have been delighted to see and hear how his wonderful play, The Importance of Being Earnest, was brought to life by this excellent company. One hundred years after this classic was first performed the play retains popularity and a general fascination. The set, costumes and props were pleasing and it must have helped the performers to know they and their surroundings looked so splendid. The play was obviously well rehearsed, timing of the dialogue ensuring there was no lack of pace, not easy to achieve but so essential with this particular piece. This village hall audience were provided with a well-paced production of good quality so all involved should be proud of their efforts.

District 9 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Jose Harrison – Regional Rep District 9 :

Page 2

Play:

From start to finish this Walberton production was hugely successful from the moment we were asked to join in by booing at the baddy and ‘ahhing’ at the lovers. Don’t be mistaken, this was not a pantomime but a brilliant melodrama quite outstandingly performed by an enthusiastic cast of fifteen all kitted out in their stunning period costumes. Every member of the cast entered into the spirit of the play making full use of the simple stage set and acting area. The show flowed from one scene to another without a pause, each one made clear to the audience with written signs carried on and placed out front telling us exactly where we were while singers performed in typical melodrama style accompanied by Richard Barnes on the piano. Emily should be very proud of this riveting production. All the other principals and those not so principal gave excellent performances making for the end product which was hilarious. I went away with my jaws aching from smiling having laughed, booed and hissed my way through this delightful production. I can imagine the rehearsals must have been riotously funny. The laughter from the audience must surely have been magic to the actors’ ears. Well done.

Pantomime:

I always enjoy the LMCS pantomime and this year was no exception. Goldilocks ^ the 3 Bears was just the sort of entertainment to cheer one up on a dreary January evening. There was plenty of humour and the slapstick moments were spread throughout the show giving the audience lots of opportunities to shout and heckle. The orchestra was excellent, playing a rousing overture followed by a great rendition of ‘Come Follow the Band’, starting this production with the right ‘feel good’ factor. The direction, orchestration and choreography coupled with accomplished performances from the principals and chorus ensured that the audience went home humming the very popular musical numbers. The scenery was simple, smoothly and efficiently changed, the costumes were outstanding and the choreography was interesting, fitting appropriately to the words of the well chosen songs which appealed to all ages. A well directed and lively show throughout and a thoroughly enjoyable evening.



District 10 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Stage One Youth Theatre	Cats
Musical	CAOS Musical Productions	Half a Sixpence
Play	Lion & Unicorn Players	Lilies on the Land
Play	Portchester Players	Steel Magnolias
Compilation Show	Fareham Musical Society	Wow! That's What We Call Musicals

District 10 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Mark Donalds – Regional Rep District 10 :

Musical:

Cats by Stage One Youth Theatre – characterisation by everyone on stage was outstanding and maintained throughout to the very last minute. Costumes, wigs and make-up were superb. The whole production had energy and vitality.

Half a Sixpence by CAOS Musical Productions. A superbly fresh and energetic production with style and pizzazz in abundance. Every aspect of this fast-paced production delighted the audience.

Drama:

Lilies on the Land by The Lion and Unicorn Players – this was a real ensemble piece vividly bringing to life the hard work, harsh conditions and sheer drudgery that the Women's Land Army endured to help the country survive in WW2. Imaginative direction and a great setting for this memorable piece.

Steel Magnolias by Portchester Players – another great team effort with superb characterisation which, along with an excellent set, costumes and wigs, took us from desperate tragedy to raucous comedy in the blink of an eye.

Compilation Show: (instead of a pantomime)

Wow! That's What We Call Musicals by Fareham Musical Society. So much more than just everyone's favourite show songs strung together. An imaginative and thoughtful selection of songs blended seamlessly together and executed by a very talented cast with style and precision.



District 12 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Walton & Weybridge AOS	Oklahoma
Musical	CAMUS	Thoroughly Modern Millie
Play	St Hilda's Entertainers	Mother of All Parties
Compilation Show	Hatton Musical Theatre Society	Back to Reality

District 12 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Gloria Smith – Regional Rep District 12 :

Musical:

CAMUS: ‘Thoroughly Modern Millie’:

There is an enormous amount of comedy in this entertaining musical and the commendable principals plus supporting cast worked together to bring it out – timing was impeccable. This is a show packed with dance routines and they were super.

Play:

St. Hilda’s Entertainers: ‘The Mother of All Parties’

I haven’t laughed so much for ages! One disaster after another occurs when four siblings get together to plan a surprise 70th birthday party for their mother. Chaos, panic and mayhem result as unexpected guests arrive and create unexpected problems.

Timing is all important in a farce and in this new and complex one, written by Neale Winter, a member of The Entertainers, the cast made it look so easy as they portrayed a diversity of characters absolutely brilliantly.

Compilation:

Hatton Musical Society: ‘Back to Reality’

The whole company worked together to make this a non-stop energetic compilation show with first rate singing and superbly choreographed dancing. There were ‘old time’ advertisements in black and white and the production was enhanced further by impressive lighting.



District 13

Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Milton Musical Society	Dirt Rotten Scoundrels
Play	Lyndhurst Drama & Musical Society	It's A Wonderful Life
Pantomime	Poulner Players	Peter Pan

District 13 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Marie Coltman – Regional Rep District 13 :

Musical:

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels – A great modern musical with an excellent cast. Very funny bright & colourful with good comedy and lively songs. Everyone played their part well and the ensemble sound and movement was excellent. Well done to you all.

Play:

Lyndhurst Drama & Musical Society – It's a Wonderful Life – great production, nice costumes, good set and stage effects. The cast mixed with the audience on arrival just like the 'Radio Stars' of the era did. Good characters. Well done.

Pantomime:

Peter Pan with Poulner Players. A good cast and great use of the small stage with props and set. Well thought out and everyone played their part well. Good ensemble works and great costumes. Well done to you all.



District 14 Accolades of Excellence

Musical	BATS Next Generation	Our House
Musical	BATS	9 to 5
Play	Overton Dramatic Society	Silly Cow
Play	Compton Players	The Ladykillers
Pantomime	Silchester Players	Treasure Island

District 14 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Chris Horton – Regional Rep District 14 :

Musical:

“OUR HOUSE” – BATS NEXT GEN - This musical about pride, love, community and a bit of nostalgia (with songs written by Madness) was full of polished performance all round and a great choice of show to showcase the talents of this strong and successful youth group.

“9 TO 5” – BATS - Friendship, love and bubbling performances and lots of high energy from BATS and a great evening of entertainment with music from Dolly Parton.

Play

“THE LADYKILLERS” – COMPTON PLAYERS - This black comedy farce about a sweet old lady and a band of criminals was a great ensemble piece reflecting post war England, reminiscent of a black and white film from the 40s.

“SILLY COW” – OVERTON DRAMATIC SOCIETY - Set in the 80s in the world of tabloid journalism this crude, wicked and cleverly constructed satire was full of big egos and had some fine performances all round. Lots of loud décor and witty writing.

Pantomime:

“TREASURE ISLAND” – SILCHESTER PLAYERS - This panto was full of fun, piracy and puppetry, murder, money and mutiny! This small but very established and solid group created an evening of great entertainment, energy, songs and fighting.



District 16

Accolades of Excellence

Musical	The Island Savoyards	My Fair Lady
Play	CAODS	After September
Pantomime	First Act Theatre Group	Treasure Island

District 16 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Christine Blow – Regional Rep District 16 :

Accolades 2019

The Isle of Wight, despite its diminutive size, is lucky to have a wide range of entertainment and each society takes great pride in their productions.

The Island Savoyards, who are musical theatre stalwarts, gave three productions from which to choose and this proved to be difficult. However, their 'My Fair Lady' was three hours of joy during which the entire cast smiled, sang and manoeuvred seamlessly across the stage. The costumes were outstanding and set changes carried out with ease.

'After September', performed by the Cowes Amateur and Operatic Drama Society was captivating from the start. Set in a school, the characterisations were superb and every audience member could have identified, having known in their past, at least one of the eclectic mix of teaching staff. The set was detailed and extremely well thought out and the plot moved along at the correct pace to maintain interest throughout.

The pantomime, 'Treasure Island' performed by First Act was a joy to watch from start to finish. The enthusiasm was evident and the musical numbers performed with ebullience. The audience left with smiles on their faces after an enjoyable and entertaining show.



District 17

Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Encore Youth Theatre	Return to the Forbidden Planet
Musical	Winchester Musicals & Operatic Society	Made In Dagenham

District 17 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Mark Allen – Regional Rep District 17 :

Musical:

Encore Youth Theatre Return to the Forbidden Planet.

Encore are a fantastic youth theatre group based in Winchester. This amazingly talented bunch of young people aged 10 to 18 always step up to the plate and deliver well rehearsed and enthusiastic shows. This enthusiasm and attention to detail is excellently led by the directors, choreographers and committee. With Colin Firth as their patron (and not just in title either) it's no surprise.

Made in Dagenham / Jekyll and Hyde.

Winchester Operatic and Musical society are always delivering fantastic, well rehearsed and well delivered Musical and Operatic shows. Always with a strong principle line and amazingly great chorus, all of whom seem to be really enjoying what they do, this comes over to us as an audience, leaving us feeling well entertained to a very high standard. As an individual, I always look forward to seeing anything that WOMS produce.



District 18

Accolades of Excellence

Musical	Peaslake Players	The Sound of Music
Play	The Pranksters	One Man, Two Guvnors
Play	Guildburys	A Government Inspector/Blue Stockings
Pantomime	Godalming Theatre Group	Cinderella

District 18 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Pauline Surrey – Regional Rep District 18 :

In all these winning productions great skill in direction, musical direction where applicable, and performance, were very much in evidence. Great teamwork, enthusiasm and attention to detail were paramount.

Musical:

Peaslake Players won Best Musical for 'The Sound of Music'. No detail was overlooked, there were faultless performances from all involved, fine characterisation, scenery, costumes and atmosphere. This was an inspired production, a superb show, very hard to match. And there was strong competition in this category.

Play:

Guildburys Theatre Company always produce a very high standard of drama, challenging, thought-provoking, and often very funny. This year two stood out: their open-air summer production of 'A Government Inspector', which they also took to the Minnack Theatre in Cornwall, and 'Blue Stockings', produced in the stunning yet tricky space of the Music Room at Hatchlands Park. These two productions, although very different, were equally fine, so they share this accolade.

The Pranksters also are consistently interesting in their choice of production, and are consistently fine in execution of their plays. Their production of 'One Man, Two Guvnors', a hard act to follow after the NT production, surpassed my already high expectations. It was so very very funny, brilliantly performed.

Pantomime:

Godalming Theatre Group's 'Cinderella' was simply the Perfect Panto in every way. A fantastic team excelled in this consistently funny, yet clean-humoured, many faceted Christmas treat, an absolute delight! From choreography, to costumes, to chuckles, this one ticked all the boxes.



District 19

Accolades of Excellence

Musical	BANOS	Bad Girls
Musical	Leatherhead Operatic Society	Jack the Ripper
Play	Cobham Players	The Graduate
Play	NOMADS	Round & Round the Garden
Pantomime	The Oxted Players	Robin Hood

District 19 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Jon Fox – Regional Rep District 19 (2019) :

Page 1

Musical:

BANOS – Bad Girls Sometimes when watching a musical you simply have to say "WOW". This was definitely one of those rare occasions. From the opening scene to the splendid finale this production gripped the senses in an electrifying manner. All the principal players gave outstanding performances and the depth of principal talent was rich and heartening to see. The direction and portrayal of the chained to the bed scene where Fenner met his nemesis, courtesy of Shell, was a thing of wonder and perhaps the most powerfully played single scene I have seen this year. This show just kept on giving and it is a real task to find superlatives with which to adequately describe it. Whether dancing, singing, acting or whatever they were doing this was the single most impressive and richly talented cast I have had the pleasure of watching this season. The creative team are to be congratulated on their sterling in-house effort which was thoroughly appreciated together with the well-coordinated, eminently suitable costumes. It was a colossus of a show and an even more gigantic performance by the cast and whole production crew - an evening of sheer magic and I salute you all BANOS, each and everyone of you!

The Leatherhead production of Jack the Ripper in the intimate setting of the church hall was entirely appropriate for what is a show about a community in Whitechapel in the late summer and autumn of 1888. From street ladies to Salvation Army, from the gaudy music hall to the sinister streets all aspects of this production were first-class. Spine chilling, comic timing, feisty, epic stagecraft, nuances, stage presence – all words which sum up this performance of Jack the Ripper. All in all this was a production to relish and remember! "Oh delight, Saturday Night" has never been more apt!

Play:

Cobham Players – The Graduate As play director Victoria Franklin outlined in her programme director's notes "it's a tricky business turning films into plays"! So wrote Michael Billington, "The Guardian" theatre critic and how right he is! With its many necessary and quick scene changes, the director was entirely correct in largely dispensing with the traditional complicated and lengthy scene changes and working with minimal set, great use of lighting and the imaginatively used screen projection on stage. The cast worked well as a team and their performances were further enhanced by the excellent production. I was impressed by the excellent diction throughout with not a single prompt needed! Backstage folk did sterling work too – the stage crew worked smoothly and were well supported by both sound and light together with some excellent projection. The Californian accents were generally good, some excellent, and none were poor. Truly a night to remember!

District 19 – Accolades of Excellence

Comments from Jon Fox – Regional Rep District 19 (2019) :

Page 2

Play:

NOMADS – Round & Round the Garden This sparkling Ayckbourn comedy made a great impression on me. To see amateur actors stepping into the shoes of showbiz greats was always going to be a worry, I reasoned. But I need not have been at all concerned, for the six players all did admirably well. Almost incredibly there was not a single prompt - indeed, I later learnt that the director chose not to have a prompt in the wings at all. The whole piece had excellent pace, with crisp and completely audible diction. There was a most professional feel to the production. All six were beautifully cast and the actors really got inside their respective characters, thus exposing the human foibles so well explored by Ayckbourn. A highly successful and most enjoyable production throughout.

Pantomime:

The Oxted Players – Robin Hood It is almost unique in amdram that the author of the piece is also the stage director. Jane Maisey deserves huge praise for both these achievements. Her script was amongst the best I have ever read in amateur pantomime. It was full of adult rib-ticklers and comic business for all ages. Unusually these days, it included a slosh scene - for me, an essential component of all panto. A great deal of planning, forethought and attention to detail was evident and the show was much the better in consequence. With the strongest and deepest principal cast I have seen in recent years all the necessary ingredients were in place for a top-quality performance. And my, how they delivered! A strong chorus of Merrie Men (in tights), able and youthful, real dancers and vibrant female chorus completed the most deeply talented panto cast I have seen since becoming a NODA rep. The music was well chosen, mostly upbeat and sung and played to a standard far beyond what one would expect of an amateur panto. There were so many very many wonderfully humorous scenes and lines that they are impossible to mention in this space, but one will remain long in my memory. It was spoken by Will Scarlet, answering his mobile 'phone and ran thus "Oh, I'm at the Panto, no, it's rubbish." Oh no it wasn't, Ziggi, Oh no it wasn't! What it was, was a memorable evening that has raised the bar of what is technically but ludicrously called "amateur" panto to a height that I have yet to see even approached, let alone equalled.

TOPS, I salute you and thank you all for an immensely enjoyable and memorable evening. OH YES IT WAS!