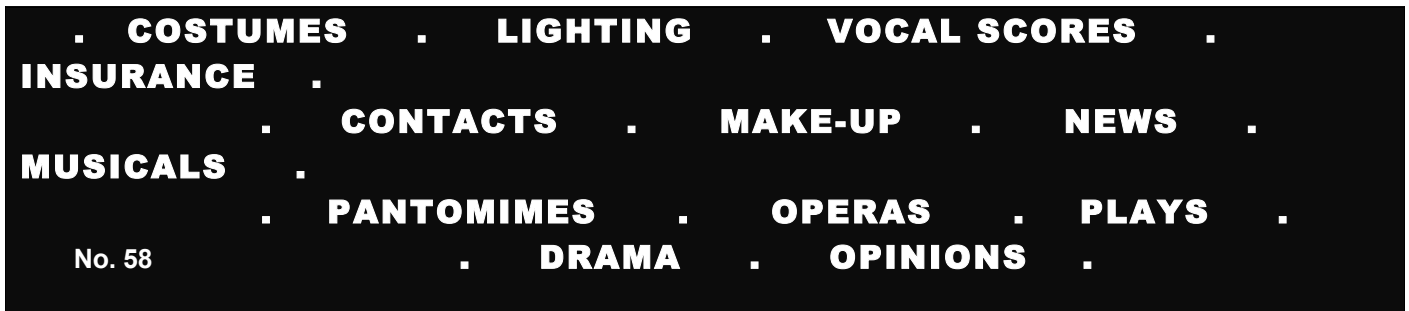


***National Operatic & Dramatic
Association
South West Amateur Theatre
Magazine***

“Lost in the Wilderness”

AUTUMN 2008

**. REVIEWS . STAGE MUSICALS . OPERETTAS .
SCENERY .**



CAROL LEE reports on District 2

Oliver !	St. Austell Operatic Society	Glorious	St. Austell Players
Aladdin	Kidz R Us	Summer Holiday	Newquay Amateur Operatic Society
Our Day Out	Stage Struck Youth Theatre	Anything Goes	Kidz R Us
Chase Me Comrade	St. Austell Players	We found love & an exquisite set of porcelain figurines	

OLIVER !	St. Austell Operatic Society	Keay Theatre
<i>Director/Choreographer: June Collings</i>		<i>April 2008</i>
<i>Musical Director: Michael Teague</i>		

Entering this modern theatre, one was transported back to the Victorian world of Charles Dickens, and this before any action began. The scenery (on movable boat trucks) was just superb and most authentic. The ease with which it was moved was a revelation. This so popular show took on a new dimension. The hungry orphans and Oliver's plea for more being performed in a very meaningful way, as were all the vignettes of Victorian life which followed. The full chorus scenes were well choreographed and played with great conviction and enjoyment. One of the highlights for me was the scene with the “cries of London”. This worked superbly. All the principals were extremely well cast. A word of praise here for young Oliver. Every word could be heard – not always the case with youngsters. Costumes (*Kidz R Us*) were excellent and worn well. Hairstyles were also well in period. The eight-piece band playing off-stage provided an excellent backing to the extremely enjoyable singing. This was a well-known and well-loved show performed with superb freshness and some innovative touches.

GLORIOUS	St. Austell Players	Arts Theatre, St. Austell
<i>Director: Kathy West</i>		<i>13th May 2008</i>

It's always good to see the 'drama' part of NODA being represented and this particular production could not be faulted. From its comparatively quiet opening and the interchange between Florence and St. Clair the action never flagged. Seldom have I seen a production which flowed so easily and full praise is due to this group which has the ability to cast every role so appropriately. Florence turned in a magnificent performance, creating a very believable and larger than life character. Knowing that this actress is a singer, I do congratulate her on her ability to create the 'fractured' voice of Florence. She was totally in control throughout as can be said for the entire cast who without exception made the most of their roles. How fortunate to have a pianist of the calibre of 'Cosmo' to fill this role. Scenery was very good indeed and changes managed with ease. Props too were well in period, as were the very colourful costumes. Lighting very effective and the whole combination provided the audience with a totally enthralling evening and I am sure that there were those in the audience who, like myself, were reluctant for it to end.

ALADDIN	Kidz R Us	St. Ives Theatre
<i>Director : Phil Barnett</i>		<i>June 2008</i>
<i>Choreographer : Rhona Cleland</i>		
<i>Musical Director : Peter Luing</i>		

I knew nothing whatsoever of the Walt Disney “Aladdin”, my only experience being pantomime. Therefore

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this very highly coloured and slick production was a revelation to me. The energetic opening with the entire cast on stage set the seal on an extremely competent and fast moving experience. The beautifully choreographed action, making every use of the wide stage was almost breathtaking. The colourful flats with attractive oriental designs, giving a kaleidoscope effect had been carefully thought out as too were the wide range of colourful costumes. The scene with the flying carpet and the fluorescent items passing at the back of the stage was very well done indeed. All of the parts were beautifully cast and the knowledge that the company is able to mount two completely different casts was a revelation. Every principal role was played to perfection and an expertise not always shown by an older cast. This was of course a production for the younger element of the group and it is good to know that there is so much talent ready to go into the older group. It should be mentioned that all the sound and lighting was undertaken by a team from the Kidz which was excellent. Only proviso was that the background music was perhaps a little obtrusive but that is the only criticism that I would make.

SUMMER HOLIDAY	Newquay Amateur Operatic Society	Thetheras School
<i>Producers: Tara Davin, Chris McQuillen-Wright & Andi Shacklady</i>		<i>Musical Director: Anna Minear</i>
<i>2008</i>		

In sharp contrast to their last production, this talented group tackled the stage version of this well-known film with great panache, resulting in a first-class production. From the beginning, set in the London café where plans are being made for a holiday touring France in a London Transport bus, the action never flagged. The subsequent adventures made a very interesting plot aided by the various characters met on route. The so familiar songs of the sixties (well known I fancy to many members of the audience) were delivered with great panache and energy. Bearing in mind the size of the stage the choreography was superb and performed with dexterity. Costumes were in period and well thought out. I liked the screen on the side of the stage, showing the progress of the bus on its scheduled way to Athens. A nice touch. The bus itself was well in evidence and looked authentic. All roles were well cast and without exception showed a great of work in their interpretation. The seven piece band provided an authentic sixties' sound for the backing.

OUR DAY OUT	Stage Struck Youth Theatre	St. Johns Hall, Penzance
<i>Director : Judith Nicholls</i>		<i>Choreographer : Ruth Caird</i>
<i>Musical Director : Kevin Lane</i>		<i>July 2008</i>

Having seen the original play version I was looking forward to this musical offering, nor was I disappointed. From the entrance of the schoolchildren through the auditorium and the “We’re Going Out” number, the whole production flowed beautifully, the humour being very well-pointed, but above all we were treated to a whole lot of fun and laughter. The bus driver’s song was sung with authority as were all solos, and principal roles were well cast, a very strong performance coming from the hapless schoolmaster sent to give an air of sanity to the whole outing. Also the cameo role of Carol which was very touching. I liked the “I’m in love with Sir” number and the dramatic irony displayed was worthy of a more mature cast. This is a very large stage to fill and the Director should be praised for her setting which had been done with expertise as too had the choreography. Some dialogue was a little indistinct, but this is the fault of the hall and not the cast. Music was strongly supportive, but never intrusive. This was a splendid production for every child who longs to misbehave but does not quite dare. A simple set worked very well. The whole show was skillfully staged and costumes were well thought out. The finale after a slightly sad previous scene, with the entire cast dancing and singing with great energy was very well staged and put the seal on what was a most enjoyable production.

ANYTHING GOES	Kidz R Us	St. Ives Theatre
<i>Directors: Martin Knight & Phil Barnett</i>		<i>Choreographer: Rhona Cleland</i>
<i>Musical Director: Peter Luing</i>		<i>2008</i>

Superlatives are the norm for this talented young group, but this version of the time honoured Cole Porter musical was breath-taking. From its impressive opening with the passengers boarding the very authentic liner, to the final chorus number the action never faltered. The glamorous thirties' costumes, coupled with the ladies' authentic hairstyles were noteworthy. I particularly liked the scene when everyone was in black and white. The costumes were just simply superb and in every case, worn beautifully. The lovely turquoise ones used in

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the finale were breath-taking. Freezes, as usual, were good. The ship's orchestra set upstage and elevated worked well. It was amazing the way in which the thirties idiom was portrayed. The familiar Porter songs were without exception, beautifully put over, especially "Blow Gabriel, Blow". All the principal roles were well cast and played to perfection. A great deal of thought had gone into this production with great attention to detail in every aspect, resulting in a slick and most professional show.

CHASE ME COMRADE	St. Austell Players	Arts Centre Theatre
<i>Director : Frederick Rowe</i>		<i>August 2008</i>

My immediate reaction to this very amusing play was what an inspired choice it was both for this talented group and such an attraction for holiday visitors. Contrary to popular conception, farce is never an easy option, timing being of the essence. From curtain up the action never faltered, every nuance of comedy was seized upon with great dexterity. All of the expected farce essentials were there, all entrances and exits being undertaken with speed and ease. The expected dropping of trousers and the bumbling arm of the law all carried off with panache. The well designed set was appropriately 'sixties as too were the costumes. The lighting was excellent and praise is due to those members of the cast who spent a considerable amount of time going in and out. An interesting plot played in such a way as to be utterly believable. The Russian dialogue was extremely well presented. Was it really Russian or just the figment of the author's imagination ? Either way it was really convincing. Lines were just a trifle hurried in the opening stages, but these soon settled down, resulting in a well-staged and acted and thoroughly enjoyable production.

"WE FOUND LOVE & AN EXQUISITE SET OF PORCELAIN FIGURINES BOARD THE S.S. FARNDALE AVENUE"	
<i>Directors: Jackie Crago, Nick Simpson and Philip Barnett</i>	<i>2008</i>

After an energetic summer of productions by the KIDZ Younger Set, it was a treat to see four of the "older" group presenting a very energetic and lively production, with a cast of 20 played by four very lively people. The opening with a very slick disc jockey went well and action flowed admirably, entrances and exits were carried out very slickly. One can only admire the dexterity with which this talented cast moved from role to role, despite the mayhem which inevitably ensues. The opening with Mrs. Reece, the Guild Chairman giving her usual notices worked beautifully and her every entrance in what other role evoked spontaneous laughter. This was, in fact, true of all cast members and if at times we lost sight of the "plot" (was there one ?) Well, it didn't matter because cast and audience were having so much fun. I liked the shades of "Private Lives" played so well. We were presented with an excellent send-up of a '30's comedy providing so many laughs. A well-constructed set added to the whole thing as, too, did the costumes and each cast member playing multiple roles was well in command. I understand the only male role was a substitution and mention should be made of his competence in handling the role. This was altogether a fun filled evening and an audience left with the hope that this would not be the last of such an event.

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