

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

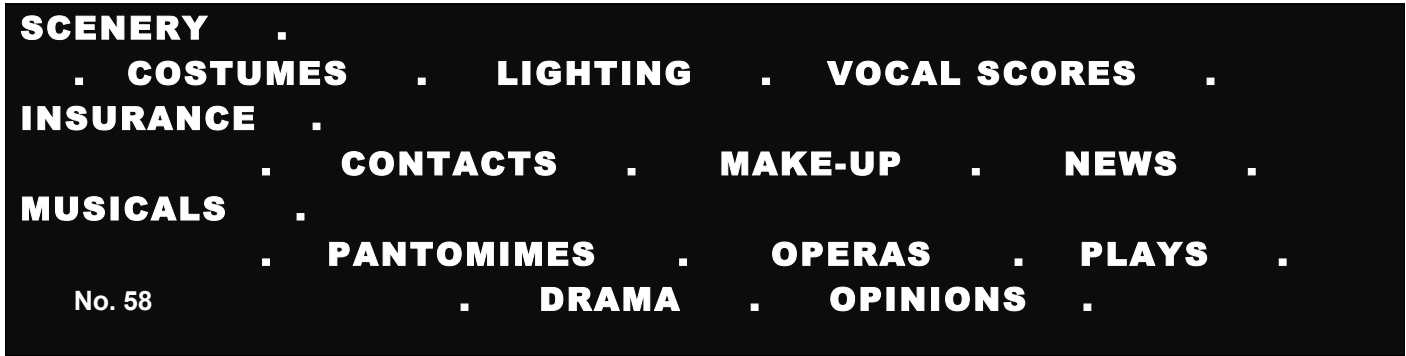
**“Lost in the Wilderness”**

**district 3  
AUTUMN 2008**

**REVIEWS**

**STAGE MUSICALS**

**OPERETTAS**



**MICHAEL SIMPSON reports on District 3**

Aladdin	Youngstagers	Hello, Dolly!	Plymstock Operatic Society
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<b>ALADDIN</b>	<b>Youngstagers</b>	<b>Saltash Community School</b>
<i>Director: Marylyn Grose</i>	<i>Musical Director: Neil Bailey</i>	<i>March 2008</i>

Written by Tony Cottrill, this show had all the energy and enthusiasm I have come to expect from this company. A group of talented principals made the most of their considerable parts and no doubt inspired the rest of the company to do the same. I always try not to pick out individuals because everyone is important to the complete production, however, in this instance I must mention the two policemen who were extremely good and picked up the comedy so well that when they were on I was drawn to them with thinking- very well done. The choreography which involved which involved a number of teachers proved to be very good as the dancing shone. The handmade costumes were quite gorgeous and all the colours blended very well with a lovely finale set. The band played the lovely selection of songs beautifully but at times overpowered the vocalists. This was mainly due to the gremlins in the sound system, which I believe was due to the fact that it has to be dismantled every night and reset for the next performance. I always enjoy my visits to this company because they put so much effort into every aspect of their shows.

<b>HELLO, DOLLY!</b>	<b>Plymstock Operatic Society</b>	<b>Athenaeum Theatre, Plymouth</b>
<i>Director: Barry Sanigar</i>	<i>Choreographers: Carole Wilson, Denise Avent &amp; Jane Hooper</i>	
	<i>Musical Director: Jenny George</i>	<i>March 2008</i>

**Iain Douglas reports:-**

This company coped well with the challenges that this fast moving song and dance spectacle presents. Attractive scenery (*Real Scenery*) and excellent costumes (*Triple C*) created a good visual feel. Scene changes were slick and the overall pace of the show was quite good. There were some bright sparks in the younger roles, especially Matt Straw (Cornelius) and Alex Ford (Barnaby). Carol Harrison (Dolly) coped well with her challenging role and I felt Edward Gigg (Vandergelder) created a lovely genial character. The lack of men meant females formed the backbone of the waiters gallop, but I am afraid I was not convinced with the choreography here, it being very repetitive and unimaginative. I also felt that the general ensembles could have benefited from more individual direction of characters to create more interesting crowd scenes. The band supported well and musically the show was in fine fettle.

<b>OLIVER !</b>	<b>Wranglers Theatre Company</b>
<i>Director/Choreographer: Wendy Holmes</i>	<i>Musical Director: Barrie Mills</i>
	<i>May 2008</i>

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There is always the temptation to say Oh no, not another Oliver !, but when a production is as well cast and fresh as this it has no relevance at all. The principals were on top form and the chorus and dancers looked as though they were enjoying themselves. I must compliment Leonie Heath who at very short notice took over the part of Nancy due to the indisposition of Rachael Quayle. The scenery provided by the company's own Hire Department was most effective and the costumes from (Costume Workshop I.O.W.) were colourful and of course very much of the period. The lighting design by Dan Quayle was mostly complimentary, however, I think a little more thought should have gone into Fagin's den, it lacked the sinister atmosphere that should have been portrayed. Musically both Principals and Chorus were of a good standard although I think the Orchestra could have shown a little more empathy towards the less mature voices, it was difficult to hear some of the lyrics at times. Undeniably anyone who saw this show would have been thoroughly entertained, I know I was. Very well done.

<b>SONGS FROM THE MOVIECALLS    The Revue Players    Athenaeum Theatre, Plymouth</b>
<i>Director : Andy Coles    Choreographer : Katie Lynn    Musical Director : Gary Hawkins    May 2008</i>

The idea behind this show was to present songs not necessarily from shows but from film theme songs, inevitably there were times when crossovers did happen. Set in a family home on Christmas Day with the family watching the usual television offerings this allowed the indulgence of nostalgia. The degrees of talent displayed varied considerably and allowed for the very new and nervous to the more established principals playing their part. The fairly large chorus was hampered somewhat because of the way the stage was laid out, even though the set was very minimal they were mostly configured into an L shape which restricted movement considerably. I think also that more could have been made of the set with some simple dressing. The dancers did very well and there were two very fine duets from Katie Lynn and Andy Coles. The MD kept good control over the band, who were very pleasant to listen to, and managed to pull them back at one point to help a male duo who lost their way. Always a dilemma when putting on a production of this nature are costumes, here they were kept to the ordinary kind of dresses etc., that one associates with every day and party outfits. I found the lighting disappointing as there was no variation throughout the show. Taken as a whole this was a very pleasant evening.

<b>DISNEY'S ALADDIN    Plymkids Juniors    Athenaeum Theatre, Plymouth</b>
<i>Director/Choreographer : Jo Stewart    Musical Director : Karen York    June 2008</i>

This was quite an undertaking to direct 92 children whose ages ranged between six and eleven but it certainly was worthwhile. It was bright, well paced and very disciplined. All the Disney songs were sung with gusto and the duet between Aladdin and Jasmine was delightful. There is no Abanazer in this production but Jafar and Iago were a great double act, their comedy timing for such young people was spot on. The repartee between Aladdin and the excellent Genie was as slick as any I have seen. The movement of the magic carpet had been well thought out as were all the scene changes, just moveable drapes that worked very well. The music was pre recorded but the MD was side of stage to make sure everyone was on the beat. All the movements were synchronized beautifully and even though there were so many on stage they didn't appear to be overcrowded. Costumes for so many cast members must have been a nightmare however they all looked lovely and pristine. I saw the Thursday team but I am sure the other team would have been as well cast. A huge well done to everyone.

<b>H.M.S. PINAFORE    Plymouth Gilbert and Sullivan Fellowship    Athenaeum Theatre</b>
<i>Director/Choreographer : Alan Spencer    Musical Director : Jonathan Watts    June 2008</i>

There are many adjectives I could use to describe this show but perhaps the most appropriate would be outstanding. Every principal embraced their character and played their part to perfection. It would be wrong to select any individual for praise because each and everyone complimented the other. This carried over to the excellent chorus work in movement and singing and they were a credit to both the Director and the Musical Director. The ten piece orchestra created a lovely jaunty sound and were kept perfectly under control by the

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MD. scenery (*Paul Lazell Scenery*) was very well appointed and just sufficient for this stage. Costumes were supplied by (*The Costume Store*) were just beautiful especially the turquoise dresses with lovely white accessories, they were quite stunning. Make-up too deserves a mention, very subtle, never overdone. Peter Blackmore's lighting design was a delight and very well operated. Scene changes were swift and quietly done so there were no delays in the continuity. This was quite simply a lovely evening at the theatre.

<b>SEUSSICAL</b>	<b>Plymkids Theatre Company</b>	<b>Devonport Playhouse, Plymouth</b>
<i>Director/Choreographer : Jo Stewart</i>		<i>June 2008</i>
<i>Musical Directors : Karen York and Trefor Farrow</i>		

Based on the story of *Horton, the Elephant* these children certainly had a wonderful time performing the different characters. The beauty of these stories by Dr Seuss lies in the ability to stretch the imagination, not only by the performers but the audience as well. In actual fact some of the people around me seemed a little puzzled. This could be attributed to the fact that these stories were originally written for the American market and only in recent times have they been introduced to British shores. I found the whole evening fascinating. The stage settings were very well thought out and the costumes were simple but very effective. Lighting played a big part in the production of this show, because of the split level stage big scenery is not an option and therefore creative lighting is imperative. Bearing in mind the young voices the singing by the principals came across very well and the ensemble numbers were very enthusiastic. It was so good to see something different and so suitably written for people of this age group. I came away feeling thoroughly entertained.