

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

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

“Open a New Window”

SPRING 2010

**. REVIEWS . STAGE MUSICALS . OPERETTAS . SCENERY .
. COSTUMES . LIGHTING . VOCAL SCORES . INSURANCE .
. CONTACTS . MAKE-UP . NEWS . MUSICALS .
. PANTOMIMES . OPERAS . PLAYS .
No. 61 . DRAMA . OPINIONS .**

SUE POMEROY reports on District 9

Dracula	Winscombe Youth Theatre
Fiddler on the Roof	Weston-super-Mare Operatic Society
Copacabana	Clevedon Light Opera Club Juniors
42 nd Street	Wells Operatic & Dramatic Society
Shakers Re-stirred	Portishead Players
Scrooge – the Musical	Bridgwater A. O. S.
A Christmas Celebration	Nailsea Musicals
Disney's Alice in Wonderland	BEES
Sleeping Beauty	Bridgwater Pantomime Society
Dick Whittington	Clevedon Comedy Club
Aladdin	Burnham Pantomime Society
Humpty Dumpty	Coastline Players
Honk Jnr.	The Oppitts
Rebecca	Portishead Players

DRACULA	Churchill Community School	Winscombe Youth Theatre
----------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------------

Director: Theresa Hemming

June 2009

Having accepted an invitation to see WYT production of Dracula I was unfortunately unable to attend for which I apologise. I hear from Theresa that the production was a success.

The show went well and had good audiences. It was also a very good experience for the students as they had to do their own set and strike it after the last performance, and staged in the round it was a new experience for them all. I look forward to seeing "20th Anniversary Showcase" next July

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF	Weston-super-Mare Operatic Society	The Playhouse
----------------------------	---	----------------------

Director: Owen James Choreographer: Marina Fairhead Musical Director: Matthew Tilke

This show entertained from start to finish, from the unusual pre curtain - chorus and children on stage, to the cast leaving Anatevka through the auditorium. The story burst into life with the entrance of Tevye (Robbie Burns). This role was a tour de force; he was Tevye in every move, song, and carefully considered line; delivered with perfect timing, humour and pathos. Tevye was fortunate to be complemented by the entire company; all the leading players were talented and understood their roles perfectly. The director integrated the chorus as often as possible and in 'To Life' and 'Anatevka' this worked excellently, giving the company opportunity to show chorus singing to advantage. The choreography was well conceived, simple and well performed. A new orchestral arrangement brought the 'Russian sound' to the show and the orchestra played with total sympathy for the performers. The large set from *Scenic Projects Ltd* worked well, and lighting and props added to this powerful tale. Congratulations to the director. He should be well pleased with this production. It entertained, made us

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

laugh and cry, sent us home with wonderful melodies ringing in our ears and a beautiful picture of snow falling on a forsaken Anatevka.

NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & AWARD CEREMONY

Palace Hotel, Torquay

Saturday 25th September 2010 @ 2:00 p.m.

Your attendance is expected

on the occasion of the inauguration of

our very own Gerry Branton as National President

Please put this date in your diary and encourage your members to come along too.

You are also invited to join in the weekend of special celebratory events

COPACABANA Clevedon Light Opera Club Juniors Princes Hall

Producer: Lynda Prescott Choreographer: Jane Bradley Musical Director: Carol Kenway September 2009

'Copacabana' has music by Barry Manilow and is based on one of his earlier songs of the same name. It is quite difficult to compare Copacabana with other shows as what you see is what you get: in other words you don't go looking for significance and depth but you enjoy the music, the performances and the spectacle. Within two minutes I had forgotten I was watching a junior company aged between 8-17, such were the intensity of the performances. The cast's enthusiasm was infectious as they obviously enjoyed themselves. The brassy orchestra produced a big sound, which demanded our attention from the opening notes of the overture and with the company behind gauze, dressed all in white; a stunning visual effect was created. The show relies on the visual effect and this was achieved with excellent mostly 'home grown' costumes and a simple but very effective set. To incorporate the wide age group into the company was a challenge and all the young people were given a chance to shine. The principal performers showed talent and confidence and Clevedon should be pleased to have so many young people able to progress to the 'seniors'. The production team should be congratulated on their achievement and judging by the audience response the Clevedon Juniors have another success rivalling last year's award winning 'Calamity Jane'.

42nd STREET Wells Operatic & Dramatic Society The Playhouse, Weston-super-Mare

Director: Bob Gibbons Choreographers: Lois Bennett & Carrie Buck Musical Director: Carol Kenway

Talented and pretty small town girl hits the big time in 1930's New York. That basically sums up the story, but this evergreen show is also stuffed with award winning song and dance numbers, 'We're in the Money', 'Lullaby of Broadway', and 'Forty Second Street' to name just three. When a society with a

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

large membership of mixed ages and mixed abilities chooses what is primarily a ‘dance show’ they must be pretty certain of commitment from the cast to learn and present the huge song and dance routines. WOD’s cast obviously showed the necessary dedication and determination over a long rehearsal period. The resulting production showed what can be achieved with an in-house production team, undoubted talent, all-round teamwork and perseverance. The opening number was a bright and colourful audition scene with the whole company tap dancing, alright some of the less able dancers fell at the first fence and were eliminated from the audition, but none the less everyone was tapping away like a ‘pro’ and this set the scene for the entertaining production that followed. The principal players all sang acted and danced their way through with confidence and ability, supported by very able chorus and dancers. The large effective set and colourful costumes added to the entertainment. This was, without doubt, a company show. No one was excluded and the production team should be proud of the results.

18th July 2010

SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL AGM & AWARD CEREMONY

Holiday Inn, Taunton 10:45 a.m.

Special Guest: Mrs. Margaret Coltman, President of Noda.

Lunch also available at £12 a head.

Order in advance: send a cheque to Denis Branton made payable to Noda South-West.

“Holly Woods” 89 Stone Lane, Winterbourne Down, South Gloucestershire BS36 1DH 01454 773 145

SHAKERS RE-STIRRED

Portishead Players

Somerset Hall

Director: Jason Stevens

October 2009

“*Shakers Re-stirred*” is Godber and Thompson’s very funny romp through the passing trade in an uptown cocktail bar – complete with discontented waitresses, obnoxious lads, offensive and awkward customers, and checkout girls on a boozy birthday night out. The director asked in the programme - how do you keep the audience interested in a show that has a minimal set, no props and four actresses playing multiple parts ? Having watched Portishead Players latest production I can answer that question. Take four excellent actresses, all playing different characters, put them in simple but authentic setting and arrange lighting cues to be spot on as they transform into the multitude of credible customers they also portray. Add slick delivery of comedy lines to have maximum effect upon the audience and sit back and wait for the laughs and applause that certainly followed. As a ‘Bristol Girl’ I loved the over accentuated accents of checkout girls Sharon, Tracy and Co, performed convincingly with excellent timing Was the language offensive or gratuitous? I personally don’t think so; it was necessary and demonstrated the characters perfectly. Well done to the production team for presenting such a triumph of a play and congratulations to the talented actresses and the perceptive director who gave the audience an excellent evening's entertainment.

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

SCROOGE – THE MUSICAL

Bridgwater Amateur Operatic Society

Guildhall

Director: Alan Claminus Choreographer: Shelley Smith Musical Director: Tony Pomeroy 26th November 2009

Andrew Carpenter reports:-

From the moment the curtains opened on a very impressive set with a cast in very impressive costumes I knew I was in for a good evening. This impression was further enhanced when the company sang the 'Opening' which set the tone for the night. There is no doubt that for "Scrooge - the Musical" to be a success you need an accomplished performer in the title role and in Alan Coles BAOS had just that. His characterisation was totally believable throughout and his singing voice most pleasant. Of the supporting cast I was particularly impressed with Ben Filler as Bob Cratchit, especially in the tender moments, and loved the all too short interlude from Brian Sands and Liz Jarvis as the Fezziwigs. I must, of course, also make mention of young Tiny Tim, whose solo "Beautiful Day" was most moving. The number of the show however is of course 'Thank you very much' to which Bill Bevan as Tom Jenkins and the cast did this real justice in ensuring the audience left the theatre singing it as they went. I was most impressed with the music under the direction of Tony Pomeroy. In conclusion I thank BAOS for getting my Christmas off to a flying start with this most appropriate musical.

NODA Summer School, Loughborough

A week of discovery, learning & fun.

Once you've been you'll wonder why you haven't been before!

Some places still available: contact antonia@noda.org.uk

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Nailsea Musicals

Scotch Horn Leisure Centre

Director: Mark Johnson Choreographer: Karen Johnson Musical Director: Jan Mousley

The red lighting created a warm and rich introduction to excellent family Christmas entertainment. Act I revealed an attractive nativity scene with both adults and children dressed as Victorian carollers. With the singing of carols and Christmas songs, seasonal spirit filled the auditorium and the evening unfolded offering many favourites both ancient and modern, pantomime, dance, poems and sketches; something for everyone.

There were delightful solos and I particularly liked 'I've been to a Marvellous Party' a favourite of mine. The party theme continued with excellent changes of mood and costumes until we reached the Act I finale; a very funny pantomime nightmare concluded with the audience joining the performers in the 'Startrecking' song; excellent comedy. Act II produced more Christmas magic and it was evident that this company has many talented players who can sing both as soloists and within the company. It was good to see opportunities to shine given to all the cast throughout the show. A Nailsea Musicals version of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' brought the house down! The children were delightful throughout and this company must be very pleased to have such talent coming through the ranks. The use of flashing lights shining into the audience was off-putting, but this one point does not detract from the excellent entertainment that was afforded to all who came to see the show.

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

DISNEY'S ALICE IN WONDERLAND Burnham's Excellent Entertainment Society

Production Team: Vikki Adams, Dawn gray & Sandy Ballantyne

12th December 2009

Taking a film and turning it into a stage musical doesn't always work well when it is cut to size for schools and youth groups. The story of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland comes at breakneck speed and there is a lot of story to be told. BEES are a small youth group presenting their 26th production and this show presented a huge challenge. Many of their older and experienced performers have moved to college, thus this small and mainly young group of children had to be supplemented by adults to enable the production. The tale is complex and the dialogue needs to be heard. The staging is difficult, requiring special effects and complex lighting and although enthusiastic, the production team were unable to cope adequately. The costumes were excellent, bright and colourful and there were good performances particularly from Alice and the Queen of Hearts. A fair attempt was made to instil humour and life into the show but the under rehearsed cast were left floundering on occasions although the younger children were very sweet. Audiences for this 2-performance production were poor and I wonder how BEES will manage to keep going after expenses have been paid. I understand there will be an influx of new talent in the New Year and I wish the group every success.

NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & AWARD CEREMONY

Palace Hotel, Torquay

Saturday 25th September 2010 @ 2:00 p.m.

Your attendance is expected

on the occasion of the inauguration of

our very own Gerry Branton as National President

Please put this date in your diary and encourage your members to come along too.

You are also invited to join in the weekend of special celebratory events

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Bridgwater Pantomime Society

Town Hall, Bridgwater

Producers: Keith & Margaret Robinson & Richard J. Porter

23rd January 2010

Choreographer: Jo Elson Musical Director: Joe Moretti

Gerry Branton reports:-

Written by Directors/Producers Keith & Margaret Robinson, this panto had all the ingredients of the well loved fairy tale, brought up to date with lively contemporary songs and topical present day jokes. I am always impressed with the effort this company puts into their sets and costumes and this year was no

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

exception. Excellent sets and effects carried us through each authentic scene and I compliment you on the novel “Turret” scene, complete with steps, cleverly hidden behind the Throne Room gauze. Care had been taken to colour co-ordinate sets of costumes and the Finales of each act were stunningly dressed, as were the sets of costumes for the wonderful dancers. Dancing was a highlight in this performance and I commend both junior and senior troupes for their expertise and attractive delivery. On the technical side, some erratic sound equipment meant that we were unable to hear dialogue from the younger members of the Chorus, which was a shame as they were telling the story. However, all musical deliveries were audible and ensemble work was well presented. Well cast principals portrayed their respective characters with genuine enjoyment and full marks to Ollie (Lewis White) and his Mum, Nurse Hitchen (Ken Stone) for their enthusiastic rapport with the audience. How we loved them, as we did the beautiful Princess Aurora (Sophie Morris) and her charming Prince Richard (Scott Clapp). The King and Queen, played by producers Keith and Margaret were equally impressive and waving their magic over us all were the Good Fairies Lilac, Rosebud and Floribunda. To counter-balance all this goodness, Fairy Blackthorn, as played by Lindsey Stone and strikingly attired in black and green, strongly represented the forces of evil. Hiss, boo! Well done, an enjoyable production.

DICK WHITTINGTON

Clevedon Comedy Club

Princes Hall, Clevedon

Director: Kerrie Barrie Musical Director: Gaynor Burgess

24th January 2010

With a traditional story, bright scenery, colourful costumes and a responsive audience, how could anyone fail to be entertained? The company needed time to become secure in music and movement, but with the entrance of the principals the show unfolded. In true pantomime tradition, boy met girl – Dick Whittington and Alice Fitzwarren, nicely performed with well sung duets. A good fairy Dizzy Izzie and excellent evil Queen Rat in turns protected and thwarted the lovers and with well presented comedy from ‘Sarah the Cook’ and Alderman Fitzwarren, a funny and talented, Idle Jack. Captain Upspoke and Jim Lad had excellent timing and their funny dialogue made them favourites with the hugely participating audience. Then everyone lived happily ever after, ‘Oh yes they did’! The music was suitable for the story, with very good ‘Fine Life’ and ‘Food Glorious Food’ from “*Oliver!*” and the MD kept the show on the road with good pace. Choreography was simple and the lighting acceptable, bright when it should be bright but too dark in the ‘green light’. The sound effects, of which there were many, were good and spot on cue. The new director should be pleased with her first production, for the audience went home smiling following a successful evening’s entertainment.

18th July 2010

SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL AGM & AWARD CEREMONY

Holiday Inn, Taunton 10:45 a.m.

Special Guest: Mrs. Margaret Coltman, President of Noda.

Lunch also available at £12 a head.

Order in advance: send a cheque to Denis Branton made payable to Noda South-West.

“Holly Woods” 89 Stone Lane, Winterbourne Down, South Gloucestershire BS36 1DH 01454 773 145

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

ALADDIN	Burnham District Pantomime Society	Princes Hall, Burnham on Sea
----------------	---	-------------------------------------

Producers: Lorna Blair & Bryony Holliman Musical Director: Colin Fretcher

February 2010

This was a fine pantomime in true British tradition. All the elements were present; good strong story, lovely costumes, excellent cast characterisations, good music and dancing, slapstick, audience participation, children on the stage, an audience sing along and a beautifully dressed walk down at the end. The pace of this pantomime never dropped and time flew by. The MD worked hard as the only musician, and even managed authentic sound effects on his keyboard. The music and songs were well chosen and the finale 'Rhythm of Life' was excellent. The society is very fortunate to have such a lively and accomplished young chorus; they looked delightful in their Chinese wigs and makeup and their stage discipline was admirable. All principals were well cast and I enjoyed their performances. The Princes Hall has limited facilities, but the home grown scenery was well chosen and the small stage never felt overcrowded. Lighting and effects were good. First time producers Lorna Blair and Bryony Holliman should be well pleased with this entertaining and traditional pantomime. Congratulations and well done to everyone, this was obviously a team effort, the cast, crew and front of house, all worked so hard. The theatre was full to bursting with an enthusiastic audience who obviously participated and enjoyed the evening's entertainment.

HUMPTY DUMPTY	Coastline Players	Village Hall, Brea
----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------

Producer: Beverly Baker Musical Director: Paul Beechey

18th February 2010

It's amazing how hard worked turned a village hall into a small theatre. This production shone with talent and humour as the cast did justice to the John Morley "creaky" script (time for some updating perhaps?). They managed to smile through the 1980's & 90's in-jokes! Although the casting was good, Ed James and Adam Hunter as 'The Kings Men' were excellent; their comic timing was spot on. Dame, John Robinson's timing, delivery of lines and vision of fun, made his performance memorable. As King, Phil Crossland, endeared himself to the audience with his mobile face and changing expressions. The scenery was bright, colourful and major scene changes were done effectively whilst using front of curtain for comic action. The costumes provided by Coastline's wardrobe team were excellent. The wardrobe of 'dame' (Olive Omlette) was masterly; I loved the red boots. Each outfit was worn with flair and attention to detail. The whole cast looked delightful, with costumes chosen to complement the production and the performers. The choreography was original and well executed. I was pleased that the chosen music, although old fashioned, complemented the story and wasn't the modern 'pop' often used in Panto nowadays. This company worked as a team and enjoyed themselves; which in turn led to excellent audience reaction and participation. Who said small is beautiful? They were right!

HONK JNR.	Weston-Super-Mare Operatic Society - "The Oppitts"	St. Jude's Theatre
------------------	---	---------------------------

Director: Laura James Musical Director: John Johnson

February 2010

This unusual show offers ample opportunity for young (I believe aged 7-17) cast members to shine, particularly when with a double cast, as was this 'Oppitts' production. The amount of work to achieve this feat must have been considerable and the production team are to be congratulated for doing so. I saw the rewards of their labours on my visit, and if the other cast were as good, then Weston Operatic Society has a secure future. The show tells the charming story of the ugly duckling and is full of humour, pathos and a not a little black humour, which the children exploited to the full (cranberry sauce and duck a la

Noda South-West Magazine Spring 2010
District 9 – North Somerset – Sue Pomeroy

orange). The music was very tuneful and many of the songs quite catchy. The story raced along, probably because this was the junior version of 'Honk!' and by necessity was much shorter than the original. It was clear that all the young people enjoyed themselves. The director had worked very hard drilling them in their routines and making them understand their characters. The Musical Director's mammoth task of teaching music (probably unknown to most of the cast at the beginning of rehearsals) to the standard they achieved was admirable. This lovely story was performed well and provided excellent entertainment for the audience. An experience the young cast will never forget!

REBECCA	Portishead Players	Somerset Hall
----------------	---------------------------	----------------------

Director: Janet Griffiths

February 2010

'Last night I dreamt I went to 'Manderley again' and as a 'Rebecca' aficionado I was not disappointed. Having not seen 'Rebecca' as a stage play before, I wondered how the story, which covers very differing locations, would be staged. When the curtains opened on the excellent set I realised that Maxim's sister would tell of the initial meeting, and then marriage of Maxim to the new Mrs de Winter retrospectively. This was well conveyed and we awaited the arrival of the happy couple. As the story unfolded, the excellent performances of Claire Flower as Mrs de Winter and Kim Chesney the spooky Mrs Danvers deserve special mention and they were well supported by John Fidel as Maxim de Winter and the rest of the cast. The excellent 'Players' produced scenery and costumes added to the very effective story telling as the characters of our imagination, from the book by Daphne du Maurier were brought chillingly to life. The atmosphere of this psychological thriller was enhanced by the well-chosen music. This was a very good re-telling of a very well known story and we were all thoroughly entertained. My only disappointment was, we didn't see Manderley burn down at the end..... too much for the budget I expect!