

**DISTRICT 1 – SOUTH DERBYSHIRE  
(REVIEWS BY KEITH SCOTT-SAVAGE)**

No reviews available.

**DISTRICT 2 – NORTH DERBYSHIRE  
(REVIEWS BY JOYCE HANDBURY)**

No reviews available.

**DISTRICT 3 - NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
(REVIEWS BY PHIL WILLIAMS)**

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**ANYTHING GOES**

Presented by: **EREWASH MUSICAL SOCIETY**  
Performance dates: 29th Sept to 3rd Oct 09  
Venue: St John Houghton School Ilkeston  
Producer: Christine Hewitt  
Musical Director: Sharon Stansfield  
Choreographer: James Rayner

An excellent production, making very good use of all the available facilities together with plenty of action on stage while maintaining a fine pace throughout. Well controlled musically with some excellent playing from the pit, perhaps overloud on occasions. A very talented cast on stage with plenty of acting and singing ability together with strong character development, typified by the excellent performances of Alexandra Tavener and Grant Walker (Reno & Billy). Superb choreography and excellent dancing were a delight to see, and again this company showed its depth of dance expertise. Lovely costumes with good attention to detail. An efficient back stage crew kept the movement going with quick changes. Super entertainment.

**DISTRICT 4 – NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE  
(REVIEWS BY ANNE KEY-HUCKERBY)**

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**'ALLO 'ALLO**

Presented by: **LOUTH PLAYGOERS**  
Performance dates: 14<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> Sept  
Venue: Riverhead Theatre, Louth  
Director: Greg Skipworth  
Assistant Directors: Maureen Lill and Shirley Wood

I'm told this production is a total sell-out. All those people will have been highly delighted they chose to see it, for there was rich entertainment. Full marks to the cast, for in addition to playing their respective roles extremely well, they were also involved in maintaining slick scene-changes. In this farce these are numerous and can prove very distracting to the audience. Lively portrayals came from Dorothy Barron {Edith}, Louise BATES{Yvette}, Simon Kettle{Lt Gruber}, Amy Dixon {Helga}, Peter Glanfield {Col. Von Strohm} and Mark Hurst {Capt. Betorelli} with Graham Turner excelling as Rene. There were no weak links. The set was to a very high standard with remarkably good props and the costumes were fine. I liked the use of piano music throughout and the dramatic use of lighting. Well done, everyone.

## A LIFE IN THE THEATRE

Presented by: **GAINSBOROUGH THEATRE COMPANY**  
Performance dates: 21<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
Venue: Old Nick Theatre, Gainsborough  
Director: Jason Browne

Playing 'in the round' suited this two-hander admirably. The minimal set showing a theatre dressing-room as well as front of stage was ideal. The two actors, Michael Hatfield (Robert) and Jamie Staton as John deserve the highest praise. Learning the lines and the essential moves was a monumental task. Robert's whole world revolves around his acting career. John, however, while aspiring to be a good actor, has other interests in his life. The play calls for great changes in emotions...and in quick succession. Dressed casually in typical rehearsal garb, the lads donned various hats, jackets and the like as required. The incidental music and judicious use of lighting added greatly to this most interesting production.

## STEPPIN' ALONG BROADWAY

Presented by: **GAINSBOROUGH AOS**  
Performance Dates: 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
Venue: Trinity Centre, Gainsborough  
Musical Director: Gerry Mooney  
Choreographer: Brent Grantham-Rae

With the ladies smartly attired in black trousers with glamorous coloured tops and the chaps in black trousers and casually open-necked shirts, the evening of musical items commenced with Willkommen (Cabaret). This was followed by a trio of numbers from Thoroughly Modern Millie and continued with songs from Oliver, Pajama Game, Mack and Mabel and Hairspray. I particularly appreciated the 'Hey There' duet by the youthful Christina Paine and Adam Saunby. The second half featured songs from Chicago, Mary Poppins, Company and Follies. The ladies really came into their own with Broadway Baby. The evening concluded with a Lloyd Webber medley. The harmony in the Phantom number was laudable. Throughout the evening the accompaniment by the three piece band was excellent. The singing was delightfully tuneful with clear diction at all times. A most enjoyable evening.

## DISTRICT 5 – SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE (REVIEWS BY PETER BREACH)

## OFF THE HOOK

Presented by: **SLEAFORD LITTLE THEATRE**  
Performance dates: 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September 09  
Venue: The Playhouse, Sleaford  
Director: Hilary Shields

The plot for this play, which was written by the late Derek Benfield in 1960, is a simple one. There are two people named Harold Spook incarcerated in the same prison and the wrong one is "sprung" by a couple of crooks to help them search for a large sum of cash, supposedly hidden in a small country-house hotel. This farce was an excellent choice of play for the company, it was well cast and provided the audience with some highly amusing entertainment. All of the players got well into character, were suitably costumed and showed good stage presence. I was much impressed with the clear projection by all the cast throughout. There were outstanding performances from Pam Edwards (Edna), George Shields (Major Catchpole), Andy Canadine (Charlie Mullins), Jeff Hemsley (Harold Spook) and Arthur Simmons (Mr Parkinson). Niki Kirk displayed "lovely touches" as the nymphomaniac Nora Catchpole. This production had good pace and excellent timing, with every member of the team dedicating their efforts to making the audience laugh. There was much attention to detail, including an illuminated sign, which showed different wording as it developed various "faults" during the performance.

## THE GONDOLIERS

Presented by: **THE STAMFORD GILBERT AND SULLIVAN PLAYERS**  
Performance dates: 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 09  
Venue: The Corn Exchange Theatre, Stamford  
Director: Pauline Iredale  
Musical Director: Rodney Dawkins  
Choreographer: Sarah Clarke

This production was very much in the traditional style and as the company has a large and loyal band of supporters, it was warmly received. The standard of music was excellent and there was always a nice balance between the orchestra and singers. The principal players were well matched to their respective roles with fine performances from Clifford Tremaine as the Duke of Plaza-Toro and Margaret Wainwright as his Duchess; Ian Ferguson played the part of Don Alhambra, the Grand Inquisitor, with solemnity. The pairings of Adam Bishop with Leigh Evans (Marco & Gianetta), Andrew Lee with Elaine Bishop (Giuseppe & Tessa) and Laurence Lewis with Joanna Hingley (Luiz & Casilda) produced some very pleasant songs. There were also very uplifting performances from the chorus. The costumes were lavish and lighting was used to good effect. The gondola arrived and departed very smoothly, thanks to the efficient stage crew. A very entertaining production, well done all concerned.

## DISTRICT 6A – NORTH LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND (REVIEWS BY MARTIN TAILBY)

## WAIT UNTIL DARK

Review by Roy Smith  
Presented by: **FESTIVAL PLAYERS**  
Performance Dates: 30th September to 3rd October 2009  
Venue: Loughborough Town Hall  
Director: Pauline Inkley  
Venue: Loughborough Town Hall

This is a taut thriller where a strong cast, combined with a well conceived set by Andrew McGowan and atmospheric lighting beautifully sustained the mounting suspense as the complicated plot unravelled. Laura Orton gave a very convincing performance as the blind girl, harassed by three unscrupulous criminals posing as police officers, played with assurance by Nick Grainger, Jeremy Malpas and particularly nasty Steve Illidge, all of whom were desperate to find a doll containing a consignment of drugs. Well directed by Pauline Inkley.

## DISTRICT 6B – SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE & LEICESTER (REVIEWS BY CHRISTINE CLARKE)

## THE FULL MONTY

Review by Martin Tailby  
Presented by: **TINHATTERS**  
Performance Dates: 26<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009  
Venue: Concordia Theatre, Hinckley  
Director: Ian Gray  
Choreographer: Michelle Clarke  
Musical Director: Nigel Hopkins

This was a great evenings entertainment . The audience was mainly full of ladies out for a night of fun. Although this show has a different audience appeal it is great to see a full theatre and was for the whole run of the show. This show was most professional from the word go. Great sets created by the company interesting to see that this had been located in Sheffield as the original film. Good direction and choreography, good lighting. Andy Lacey as Jerry was great in the part and gave a great interpretation, as were the rest of the redundant steel workers. The company created just the right atmosphere for the show. Scenery changes were all extremely slick and worked well. All the girls in the show were great and fitted into the characters brilliantly. The show was well costumed. The end was fabulous and worked really well. A show you can be truly proud of, not a dull second in it. Well done.

Best of luck with your next show WORKING this will be the Midlands premier so come along see this new show it may be just the show you are looking for for your company.

**DISTRICT 7 – NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
(REVIEWS BY KEVIN SHEEN)**

**HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 2**

Review by: Teresa Webb

Presented by: **ECLIPSE PERFORMING ARTS**

Venue: The Arc, Corby

Performance Dates: 26th September 2009

Director: Connor Wilson

The lively opening to the show set the scene for an exciting time ahead and we were not disappointed.

Some excellent characterisations came from the principal performers which were consistent throughout the production. Unfortunately some of the dialogue was lost due to rushed delivery, but in the main every word was audible.

Sharpay played by Lois Crossan was excellent, her bitchiness delivered with an edge of comedy made her a loveable character to me. Jordan Logue (Ryan) also gave a very good performance as her manipulated brother who stood her to his bossy sister in the end. Ben Maxwell and Kayleigh O'Conner (Troy and Gabriella) were perfect as the young lovers, singing their songs with sincerity and showing remarkable talent.

The musical numbers were all well performed, I particularly liked "Fabulous" which was excellent.

It was clear that the whole company worked as a team and were all involved in the action throughout. Their reactions to whatever was happening on stage was very good proving that they were all concentrating on the whole storyline.

The lack of space and facilities did not mar this production at all, the usage of slides depicting the various sets was a very clever idea and worked well. Congratulations to whoever made this possible.

The costumes were all very good and the whole production showed the dedication of the company. Well done to Connor Wilson on his first effort at directing, I hope that he has the opportunity to direct many more shows. Also for the very good choreography by Lisa Sheen and Paul Headland provided the music with perfection as always.

Thank you again for the opportunity to see the youth of Corby performing at their best.

**THE SORCERER**

Presented by: **WELLINGBOROUGH ARTS BARN G&S SOCIETY**

Venue: The Studio

Performance Dates: 16th September 2009

Director: Susan Drake

Being held in The Studio made this an intimate performance that suited the theme of the piece. Cleverly produced by Susan Drake it bridged the gap between a full production and a concert.

There were many plus's to the show in particular the harmony singing (Ring forth ye bells, With heart and voice to name but two) and the accompaniment. Congratulations to Alan Joyce and Helen Williams for pulling it together so impressively.

After a slightly nervous start the piece took shape and the characters began to come to life. The twisted plot became more and more twisted but, admirably, the company delivered their lines with a blend, tempo and clarity (Tony Rundle in particular) that made it easy for the first time viewer to follow.

There were some wonderful vocal performances on show with William Tipping and Vicki Truman exemplifying this.

There were some excellent character portrayals to admire too but I have to say it was Peter Caldwell's performance as John Wellington Wells that topped the lot for me. His delivery, stage presence, facial contortions and comic timing were excellent. He performed from the moment he entered to the moment he exited the stage. His duet (Oh, I have brought such evil) with Susan Drake was an absolute delight.

## **INTO THE WOODS**

Presented by: **THE NOMADS**  
Venue: The Masque  
Performance Dates: 18th September 2009  
Director: Mark Walker

Sondheim pieces are always difficult to perform but this production was, on the whole, extremely well delivered. Mark Walker directed this example of stage-work at its best. Well done sir.

Though some of the props were less than convincing (Rapunzels tower didn't work for me) I found the minimal use of them effective and to the point.

The opening number was excellent. Congratulations must go to Kaye Tompkins and Anita Walker for their endeavour. I must also congratulate Anita on her performance. Anita is a consummate performer and this was one of those occasions when it was easy to forget she was acting. She made it look effortless.

It would be quite easy to heap praise on the majority of the cast but it was a certain few who really impressed. Neil Richardson, Leisa Cooke (wonderful), Jenny Tymon, Karen Coles and Lester Cooke all made their parts their own and delivered some extremely strong performances; but it was Debbie Spooner and Ian Stark who made the biggest impression on me, and, judging by comments after the show, on most of the audience too.

Debbie was a joy to watch - great facial expressions, good stage presence and wholly at ease in building a rapport with the audience. Ian was just the same. His singing was spot on, his comic timing wonderful. Very well done sir.

All in all this was a terrific performance that converted more than a few who were lucky enough to watch it to Sondheim's talents.

## **DISTRICT 8 – SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE & MILTON KEYNES (REVIEWS BY NANETTE LOVELL)**

No reviews available.