

PETER PAN JR

Viva Juniors

"*Second star to the right and straight on till morning.*" Those words, written by J. M. Barrie in his 1904 play and 1911 book, PETER PAN, became far better known thanks to Walt Disney's 1953 widely popular animated musical film of the same name.

It's no surprise that when Disney began adapting their classic animated films into junior plays for children, *Peter Pan* made the cut and the youngest members of Viva gave us the same classic tale told, with the guidance of Director Jess Clifford and Music Director Joseph Hall, by about 40 aspiring artists.

I had the pleasure of seeing supremely confident performances from the ensemble of fairies, mermaids, pirates, Indians and lost boys who were totally focused throughout the performance. The singing was particularly impressive and the whole cast knew every word of the songs and every move of the dances. All were clearly enjoying their contribution to the production.

Tinkerbell and her Fairy friends, Chloe Wymer, Katie Barrett, Lillie Coghlin, Rosie Hart, Tabby Kirk, Sadie Kent, got the show off to a good start and all sung well with some lovely harmonising. They added much to the production.

Bethany Geach gave an exceptional performance as Wendy. She has a beautiful singing voice which was a pleasure to listen to. I am sure we will see much more of Ms Geach in years to come.

Her brothers, John Darling (Joseph Carlin) and Michael Darling (Fin Fordham), were natural and confident and enthusiastically led the lost boys in *We're Following The Leader*.

At the centre of it all, of course, was our hero Peter Pan, played by Oscar Vaughan, who did a fantastic job of capturing Peter Pan's mischievousness and love of play. His voice was good, and he led the children with confidence.

By Peter's side was Tinkerbell (Sienna Warder). She has a nice voice and a good stage presence. Tinkerbell narrates parts of the story which allowed the audience to empathise with her regret at having betrayed Peter.

We didn't miss a word of Oliver Howell's fearsome Captain Hook and, although the Captain overshadowed him Thomas Leadbeter as the devoted Mr. Smee delivered his dialogue well.

Another performance worthy of mention is Hannah Godfrey as Tiger Lily, who has a fine voice. Mention too for Keira Allgood (Mrs Darling), for the lovely Team of Mermaids, the Pirates very enthusiastic *Yo Ho, Yo Ho*, and the synchronised chanting of The Indians. The Lost Boys too did well and were all very enthusiastic in their roles.

Although there was a tendency to rush dialogue the dancing was good and all the soloists were comfortable with the music.

The costumes were lovely. The lighting design was extremely good as was the sound. The whole cast appeared to have body mics which worked splendidly except for a bit of

feedback when those coming to the stage from front of house passed the free-standing speakers.

The commitment and obvious enjoyment these young players had for their show was evident and I'm sure their skills and talents will continue to benefit from their involvement with Viva.

Well done to all on stage and those offstage who supported the young performers (a special shout out to the team of chaperones) for providing us all with a lovely piece of lively entertainment.

Julie Petrucci
Regional Representative NODA East, District 4 South.