



Be inspired by amateur theatre

WytKidz
Wadhurst Youth Theatre
Grease
Wadhurst Memorial Hall
Friday 15th April 2016
Producer/Director: Amanda Dann
Choreographer: Kirsty Cooper and Anneka Bones
Musical Director: Steve Frampton

The schools version of the 1971 musical by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey set in the Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly and Little Richard era, set in US after a summer vacation and the students returning to Rydell High School. The musical opens with the RHS reunion, headed by teacher Miss Lynch, introducing Eugene making a rousing speech with Patty ex-cheerleader. Danny Zuko, cool leader of the Greasers has had a secret summer romance with demure Sandy Dumbrowski. She unexpectedly arrives at the school and bumps into Danny, but he needs to retain his tough-guy reputation. She is rejected and mad, joins up with a group of popular girls the 'Pink Ladies' who are friendly with Danny. However, she finds her prim ways do not fit in and she has to try and change her 'Sandra Dee' image. So the story navigates through peer pressures, politics, rebellion, love and rock & roll. Then comes graduation and Sandy is about to change in a way no one expected! Sandy strides through the auditorium - poodle skirt has turned into tight pants and bomber jacket. Whow!

A bustling hall, packed with a most supportive audience with both bar and sweet counter active. F of H dressed in their blue club waistcoats, led by Jan directed us to seats, not labelled as per normal for unfortunately all chairs needed to be cleared for the indoor market next day!

The A5 programme - an electrifying pink was designed and produced once again by **Nick Dann** of Compass Design. Very nice lead photos within hearts, plus rehearsal pictures and a great company centre page which included the song titles. One huge guitar with 'Grease Lightning' on the front cover was great, with this theme running throughout. The NODA logo was present and correct.

The familiar, lively music was led by **Steve Frampton** also on bass guitar, with five musicians, the cast being assisted by vocal coaches **Charlie** and **Tom Snee** and together with **Amanda's** encouragement she transformed the WytKidz and the even younger Dramatiks into the cool Rydell High School greasers and Pink Ladies, Teen Angels and Cheerleaders. With some good renditions of popular pieces like 'Summer Lovin', 'Hopelessly Devoted', 'You're The One that I Want', 'Look at Me I'm Sandra Dee'. Good sound, most of the time whilst using personalised mikes – and those without, having to make an extra effort to be heard. Slowing down script is therefore very important, particularly if the audience is not as quiet as it should be!

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The **Hands** came up trumps again with particularly effective scenery. Two side flats depicted the two bedrooms required – just changing pictures and bedcovers etc, with the other a typical US diner with a huge burger. Backdrops gave a splendid Rydell school building. Good extra pieces like the school lockers, swing for Teen Angel and personal props with the piece de resistance ‘Greased Lightning’ car built by **Neil Griffin** and how well the cast members manoeuvred her.

Jill and **Penny** did an admirable job once again on the many costumes. Plenty of leathers, pink bomber jackets, poodle skirts, ‘squeezed in’ jeans perfect complete with slicked hair, shades, makeup of the era, good shoes and accessories to finish. I loved the little angels with their wings and turbans, and also the cheerleaders with their sparkling tassels.

Kirsty Cooper & Annika Bones created some excellent movement particularly with the well drilled hand jive number the cast worked hard and certainly enjoyed themselves. Well done – a real team effort, ably supporting Friday’s Sandy, **Tacita Alder**, with her lovely singing voice paired with confident, athletic, hair combing Danny Zucko played by **Alex Bush**. There were many cameo parts all so well portrayed in this Friday’s cast (boys perfecting their swaggers, athleticism and hair slicking) With a noiseless backstage crew, good sound effects, lighting and pre-recorded radio announcements, together with **Amanda’s** dedication, and the Club’s support produced an enjoyable, lively and colourful musical. Prompt, **Dot Smytherman** was more visual than vocal - the team being almost word perfect.

Thank you for inviting me. A précis will appear on the NODA website shortly.

Anne Lawson
Regional Representative
NODA SE District 3