



Be inspired by amateur theatre

**Wadhurst Dramatic Club**  
**Treasure Island written by Ben Crocker**  
**Wadhurst Commemoration Hall**  
**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022**  
**Director: Russ Kirton**

My goodness it's just over two years ago that we were in the Commemoration Hall for 'Charlie' and it's a real delight to be back at last, the company having gone through thick and thin, to stage the late, late, late panto Treasure Island with a WI cake twist – and the Squire's craving for a spotted dick – a modern Ben Crocker script well interpreted and directed by Russ Kirton and I've no doubt input from disguised Amanda Dann as pirate Seaweed Willy.

A familiar face Jan Lyman, was greeting at the door and thank you for your hospitality. The sweetshop tempted and we settled at the back of the hall with our programmes. Again, very well produced by Nick Dann on quality paper, colourful and loved the C-Arrrr-st double spread with photos of everyone – one as a portrait and the second with fun adornments!

Scenery and sets were kept to a minimum, but all most effective from Colin & Nancy and the team. The Squire's Cottage was beautifully detailed whilst on board the 'Hispaniola' we saw a sky-blue backdrop with the central wheel. A timber creak was heard, and the brewing storm well projected in shadows and actors' movement. Two angled pastoral flats angled each side of the stage throughout. Black drapes were used in the Admiral Benbow pub scene, the kitchen a simple theme for the fun slapstick cake icing demo. All worked well. Good large props, chests, tables, chairs, cakes, jewels, weapons, a parrot, great blow-up donkeys that were ridden down the central aisle, etc. and of course the essential treasure map and the BLACK SPOT!

Great live music with the two musicians Steve Frampton and Derek Johnson played guitar, drums and harmonica and the music had an uplifting sea shanty theme, toe tapping and clapping effect. Ensemble singing was strong with good harmony and the principals performed well chosen numbers, the audience participation tune got everyone on their feet and the children on stage each presented with a mask at the end. Good lighting, sound and effects were operated by team Bailey Kenchington and Bill Johnson up aloft.

Russ Kirton a key character – I hardly recognised him as poor as in cashflow Mrs. Hawkins (Mum), a cuddly dame who made a beeline for Clive and then sat on Josh's lap! Great energy, colourful and commanding with most attractive make-up and hairdos too. The loving pair Jim Hawkins – confidently performed by Annamay Porter-Reed and Elicia Osborne as a determined Jennifer Trelawney. Their goodbye duet was well performed and took some concentration with Annamay walking backwards through the central aisle. Both projected well.

Merlin Beedell (acting of course) so exactly right for the Squire character – smart in breeches and wig with his captain's cap perched on top, naive, always tempted by the WI ladies' array

of cakes. Fun and posh, simple, and always great use of his limbs – quite the athlete. In contrast our villain a scary, loud plagued by the BLACK SPOT and obsessed with Billy Bones' treasure map, Long John Silver was mastered by Tony Bailey. Looking menacing he got us all booing. His two henchman Seadog Sam and Seaweed Willy were well executed by Amy Osborne and Amanda Dann, most ably assisted by wee Orla Reynolds as The Fridge. Regular Nick Jeal was multi-tasking taking on the roles of Billy Bones who died and was removed unceremoniously, shipwrecked Ben Gunn photographer, and Captain Bloodheart. The commanding Chair, Mrs. Henderson of the Smuggler's Cove WI was competently played by Lucie Payne and well paired with her Vice Chairman Mrs Parker played by Alesha Higgins. They led the 'Follow Me' sections set by Holly Sturnam which were particularly well executed by the members.

We just loved Xan Kite's Polly. What a bird – the costume and makeup exceptional and those twitches of the head and her walk. Very good comedy part. Has to be my favourite!

The various characters – pub customers, pirates, WI members and not forgetting the skeletons and ghosts. Really good action, hearty singing, and you were all turned out so well by your wardrobe team Kate Adams and Lianne Reynolds with expert makeup by Judy Alexandra.

There were other great cameo roles very nicely characterised and well done for your united movement, lines, and vocals. Finally, thanks to Denise Beedell sitting with the musicians keeping her eye on the book.

A big thankyou to the whole cast and crew for a most entertaining evening.

A précis of this Review will be posted on the NODA website shortly.

**Anne Lawson**  
**Regional Representative**  
**NODA SE**  
**District 3**

## **National Operatic and Dramatic Association**

15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

**Tel**01733374790 **Fax**01733237286 **Email**info@noda.org.uk **Web**www.noda.org.uk

**Twitter** @NODAtweets **Facebook** NationalOperaticDramaticAssociation

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