

Chronicle Report

Sell-out Oliver a great success

IT'S every actor's dream — a sell-out two weeks before curtain up!

Witham Amateur Operatic Society were jubilant with their record-breaking success of *Oliver* staged at the Public Hall, Witham, last week. And with good reason — the whole production rolled on without a hitch.

Anthony Clough was an endearing *Oliver* with a beautiful voice and amazing projection for one so young. Stewart Adkins was the perfect *Mr Bumble*, lovably horrid, florid and furious by turns. His powerful voice was perfectly suited to his songs, *Oliver* and *Boy for Sale* giving the opening scenes tremendous vitality and lift-off.

Producer Cynthia Stead had cast well. Pat Briggs was convincing as the sharp, shrewish. *Widow Corney*, the *Undertakers* were uniformly gruesome, and John Dalglish

carried off the colourful part of the *Artful Dodger* with great zest and polish.

Nicholas Clough was a fine *Fagin*, although he looked a touch too honest and good-natured to be entirely convincing. Jan Edmunds looked good as *Nancy*, the prostitute with the heart of gold. She had a great gutsy swagger. Mike Dunion was so convincing as the vicious *Bill Sykes* that it was difficult to believe that *Nancy* could stay in love with him for-a minute.

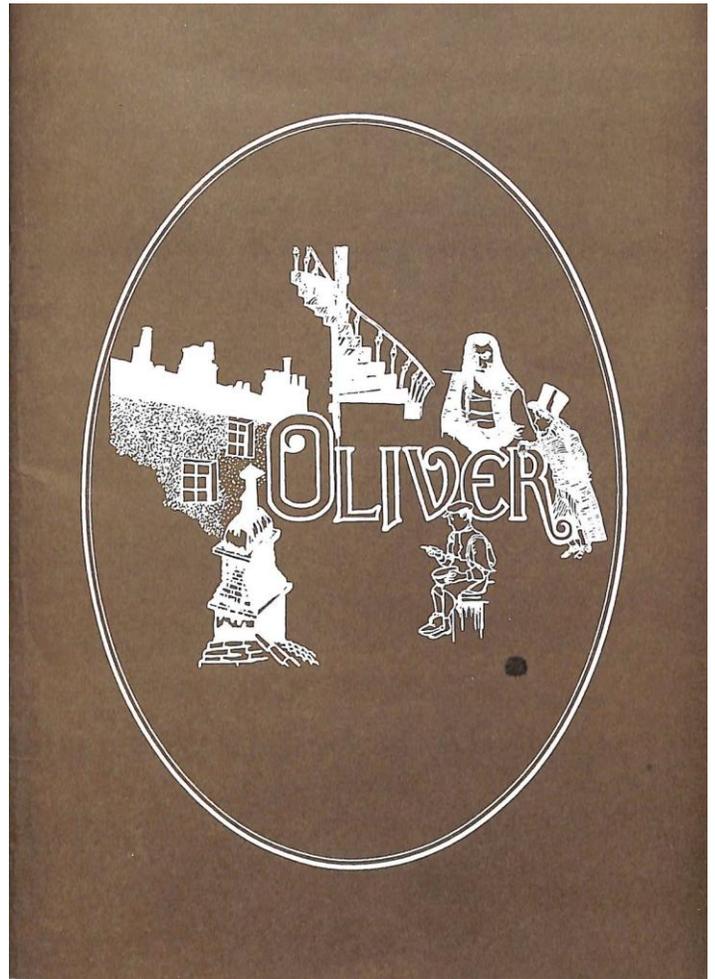
The pace of the whole production was sharp and well-disciplined. It looked good and sounded better. Both the adult chorus and *Fagin's Gang* made a great sound, but the kids stole the show

JAMES BRIGHT.

BWT Report

Oliver with vitality delights audience

YOUTHFUL enthusiasm in the hands of an excellent producer Cynthia Stead, - resulted in an outstanding performance of *Oliver* by Witham Operatic Society last week. Sold out well before the show opened it, delighted the audience with its vitality and animation.



The children in Fagin's gang were well organised, sang with gusto and responded, especially one young lady, to the dialogue. They even remembered to use their upstage arms and to sing to the audience. The adult chorus was also of a high standard.

Stewart Atkins has a fine voice and commanding presence and was 'a suitably self opinionated, pedantic, pompous' workhouse master. Pat Briggs who makes the most of her last scene after she has married him shows his feet of clay. Richard Ould made an excellent, undertaker and his wife Lydia Clough an entertaining cantankerous nag.

Musical directors are gaining control of the musicians in the orchestra and for the second week it was possible to hear the singers. Jill Parkin, the musical director, gathered together an excellent orchestra who under her direction were always in empathy with the cast.

The title role was well sung and acted with waif like innocence by Anthony Clough. Nicholas Clough played Fagin as a quiet gentle character for whom at the end one has sympathy. John Dagleish was a cheerful, lively, self confident Artful Dodger who contrasted well with the sinister, sadistic, violent Bill Sykes of Michael Dunnion. His devoted lover Nancy dominated the stage in her red dress. David Adams was a Victorian Pater Familias and other minor parts who stood out were played by Natalie Foster and David Willingham.

Lottery money would be well spent to build a theatre for shows of this quality.

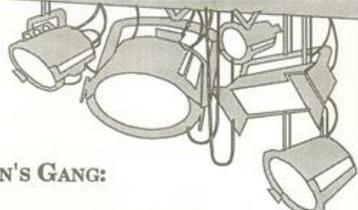
JACKIE HORNE

Chapter VI Parade of protagonists and proletariat

In their order of appearance:

<i>Oliver Twist</i>	:	Anthony Clough
<i>Mr Bumble</i>	:	Stewart Atkins
<i>Widow Corney</i>	:	Pat Briggs
<i>Noah Claypole</i>	:	Ian Willingham
<i>Mr Sowerberry</i>	:	Richard Ould
<i>Mrs Sowerberry</i>	:	Lydia Clough
<i>Charlotte Sowerberry</i>	:	Samantha Willison
<i>The Artful Dodger</i>	:	John Dagleish
<i>Fagin</i>	:	Nicholas Clough
<i>Nancy</i>	:	Jan Edmunds
<i>Charles Bates</i>	:	Simon Palmer
<i>Bet</i>	:	Natalie Forster
<i>Old Sally</i>	:	Judy Henderson
<i>Old Lady</i>	:	Marea Irving
<i>Bill Sykes</i>	:	Michael Dunion
<i>Vendors</i>	:	William Chaplin Richard Herring Patsy Page Sue Siddalls Liz Watson
<i>Mrs Bedwin</i>	:	Pam Adams
<i>Mr Brownlow</i>	:	David Adams
<i>Dr Grimwig</i>	:	Geoff Coverdale
<i>Bow Street Runners</i>	:	Roger Munt Richard Ould

FAGIN'S GANG:



Richard Adkins, Victoria Adkins, Joe Allen,
Suzanne Bellett, Michael Bignell, Jody Collings,
Victoria Haisell, Duncan Henderson, Fiona Henderson,
Billy Herring, Sophie Hughes, Oliver Jones, Sarah Lane,
Stephen McGeary, Andrew Ould, Alex Reeve, Emma Sewell,
Clair Shilling, Ryan Taylor, Grace Williamson, Sarah Willingham.

CHORUS:

Kathryn Adkins, Victoria Adkins, Muriel Chambers, Emily Chaplin,
Rosemary Chaplin, William Chaplin, Anita Collings, Jim Crimmins,
Geoff Coverdale, Anne Dobinson, Fiona Henderson, Judy Henderson,
Richard Herring, Alastair Irving, Marea Irving, Elisabeth Ladd,
Nicholas Ladd, Cherry Lenox, Laura Maidment, Anne Marsden,
Danny Mullane, Roger Munt, Richard Ould, Dennis Page,
Patsy Page, Ian Pavelin, Julia Reed, Richard Shakespeare,
Sue Siddalls, Liz Watson, Ian Willingham,
Freda Willingham, Samantha Willison.

PHOTOGRAPHY and RECORDING

Please Note: The taking of photographs and / or the recording of this performance on film, video tape, audio tape or any other recording medium is strictly prohibited.