

SURREY MIRROR

1993 *Oliver!*

Please can we have some more

The East Surrey Operatic Society chose Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* for their 1993 production at The Harlequin Theatre, Redhill. The adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* was first performed in London, in 1960, and in 1968 came to the wide screen.

Much of the action centres around a score of small boys, who fulfilled their roles admirably. As workhouse boys and street urchins, they sang with enthusiasm and clarity. Roly Annett as Oliver looked waif-like and sang "Where is Love" movingly and with pathos. Daniel Millard's Artful Dodger was confident, lively, cheeky and streetwise.

The role of Fagin presents difficulties, as it will always be associated with its creator Ron Moody. Tony Young resisted the temptation to "imitate" giving us an endearing old rogue of his own creation. He moved superbly and his use of stage and voice were excellent.

Catherine Hazell was a delight as the kind-hearted Nancy, with the coarseness the role required, while not allowing it to spoil the clarity of her singing.

Andrew Glass played Mr Bumble with a convincing amount of pomposity and cringing to Pat Felstead's equally convincing, conniving and nagging Widow Corney.

The undertaker and his objectionable family, Philip Felstead, Hilary Samways, Heather Moore and James Gautrey, gave polished performances, adding to Oliver's misery.

Somehow, Bill Sykes failed to send shivers down the spine, with his menacing presence. Peter Lines seemed ill at ease in the role.