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AMAZING OLIVER

The dark days of February were lightened by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Dramatic Society's lively production of *Oliver!* by Lionel Bart. It is truly amazing what can be done on such a small stage. David Rance designed an excellent scaffold-like set which allowed the action to move on several levels and, backed it with a splendid view of London. The director, Roberta Smith, used her space to good effect — no mean feat with such a large cast and around twenty children of various ages to move about.

The star of the show was undoubtedly Robert Jayes, in the role of Fagin. It is of course the best part, and Mr. Jayes brought out all the slyness, and humour. His rendering of "Reviewing the Situation" was a lesson in timing and well deserved an encore. Indeed all the scenes with Fagin and his gang went very well. One would not immediately think of Jav Punwar in the role of Bill Sykes, but he made quite a sinister figure and put over his number "My Name" very well. Miriam Clark made an extremely handsome Nancy, tossing her magnificent hair and swirling her scarlet skirts with such boldness that one couldn't help wondering why she stayed with Bill but, it took the pathos out of the decision to help Oliver which was surely a final act of courage from someone almost defeated by life. However, Miss Clark knows how to put over a song and one was very grateful to her for that.

Daniel Ison sang "Where is Love" very sweetly and looked suitably frail. Part of the pleasure we get out of these post Christmas productions is the sight of all the young members getting so much fun out of being

on the stage and pretending to be someone else — in this case half starved children, dreaming about food, and nimble-fingered pick-pockets. They all did extremely well and sang with great gusto. LS



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