



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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## MUSIC THEATRE CAMP 2017 – EVERLASTING

### Pelican Productions

Michael Murray Centre – Westminster College

Until 22 Jan 2017

Review by Anthony Vawser

It's time once again for the talented team at Pelican to start the music, light the lights, flex their muscles, lace their dancing shoes, warm up those voices, and give the Adelaide theatre community (plus lots and lots of parents, relatives, and friends) the annual honour of witnessing a showcase of musical theatre numbers from favourite shows both old and new. "Everlasting" is an encouraging reminder of the quality of young performers that are being trained right now in South Australia, as well as a thoroughly entertaining presentation in its own right.

With four different casts alternating between performances, this reviewer witnessed the one labelled 'Disney'. As it turned out, the Mouse House was represented by two out of eight stage musicals sampled in the selection: "Finding Nemo" and "Beauty and the Beast". The first of these was unfortunately impacted by microphone misadventure causing regular disruption, but the performers – and the songs – ultimately managed to stay afloat, while the jellyfish were a particularly delightful surprise.

"Hamilton" is a new musical that has yet to be staged outside the US, but has managed to make about as serious and instantaneous an impact as one could possibly imagine, reflective of its inclusion here, kicking off the proceedings in gloriously confident, exhilarating style. Emily Johnson is especially memorable and powerful in her solo number.

The stage version of "Tuck Everlasting" was previously unfamiliar to this reviewer, but it proved easy to be won over by the poise and maturity displayed by Alana Iannace in the role of Winnie. Maturity could hardly be described as the hallmark of "Shrek", but humorous it certainly is (unless you've absolutely no taste for what can be bluntly described as 'fart jokes'). Annie Keeves is a sparkling standout here as a wonderfully expressive and engaging Fiona.

Lionel Bart's "Oliver!" feels almost like a property that has finally played itself out, after decades of undeniable and enduring popularity, but the youngsters acquit themselves admirably here and manage to make these very well-known songs still a pleasure to revisit. Though Janie Blacker, as the title character, appears an exceptionally young actress to be asked to carry a solo ballad as delicate as "Where is Love", she can ultimately be proud of a performance that is particularly good at finishing on an impressive high note.

"Grease" will always feel to this reviewer like an awkward fit with primary-age youngsters, no matter how much the lyrics are cleaned up – but qualms of this nature aside, it's still a fun choice to feature four songs from, though the small ensemble in the title number seem yet to have mastered the particular groove, swing, and attitude that is so important in setting the tone of a US high school in the 1950s. Daisy Madigan does nicely with Sandy's solo, while Cooper James displays impressive confidence and swagger as Danny.

"Legally Blonde" is another blast of fun that requires – and receives – tons of energy and enthusiasm from its cast, which in turn communicates that buzz to a willing audience. "Beauty/Beast" was a shrewd choice to conclude the concert with; the songs are likely to be already familiar without running too much



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risk of being overfamiliar, and will be ringing pleasantly in your ears as you leave the theatre, thanks to the brilliantly uplifting ensemble effort.

“Everlasting” is certainly more than enough to make one eagerly await Pelican’s next venture on stage!