

## Sidmouth Arts Club Operatic Society

### “THE SOUND OF MUSIC”

This musical needs no introduction what so ever, with the frequent, yearly showing of the film, I doubt anyone will be oblivious to its appeal through some way or another! While audiences know not to expect a replica of the much loved motion picture, this production will have left many a stoical, diehard fan happily gratified across the board. First impressions of a restrictive, gloomy set were magnificently dispelled upon lights and action! Dark revolving flats transformed into bright, creatively painted images, opening up the stage. Back projection showed accurate perspectives and featured artwork of the highest quality. At one point, a moving bus featured on Maria's journey to the abbey, much to the enjoyment of the audience. With many scene changes, continuity can be disrupted, but this production saw immaculately dressed maids carrying out the task, drilled with military precision and not a whistle in sight! Cast without exception, firmly developed and established their characters, none more so than the charming quartet of named nuns. Each presented a warm personality with voices that silkily flowed in delightful union alongside the celestial, melodic tones of their ensemble counterparts; the icing on the cake, a most beautiful rendition of 'Climb Every Mountain', performed with clear diction and superb control, this order of nuns was definitely a force to be reckoned with! The emerging affection between Maria and the Captain was clearly and tenderly apparent. Maria (Nichola Berryman) brought freshness and gentleness to the part, her routines with the children (Hammerstein Cast) appeared natural and believable. It's an immense undertaking to direct and take a leading role; very rarely would both appear unscathed by the hugeness of the task! On this occasion it was nearly there, direction was excellent but the character of Von Trapp needed to be slightly less rigid and a little more compassionate. A great sense of fun was evident every time the children emerged; their relaxed demeanour was obviously due to a confidence inspired by a knowledgeable Director and amiable co-cast, a little team with big talent! Liesl and Rolf, the love-struck adolescents, charmed the audience with their adept, creatively choreographed dancing and clear singing, managing to hold the audience with their heart stopping, will they, won't they discovery moment. Max and Elsa, friend and fiancé of the Captain, showed pleasing stage presence with all other cast giving solid support. The occasional sound imbalance and slight lack of pace can be duly forgiven! This was an impressive production.