



# Show Report

Alderley & Wilmslow MTC

## Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

18th, 19th & 20th November 2025

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
SOCIETY	Alderley & Wilmslow MTC
VENUE	The Evans Theatre, Wilmslow
GENRE	Musical
CAST SIZE	44
DIRECTOR	Joe Clarke
CHOREOGRAPHER	Rebecca Davies
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Ed Nurse
DANCE CAPTAIN	Clare Draper
PRODUCTION SECRETARY	Katy Thomason-Stewart
STAGE MANAGER	Ilsa Connolly
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Peter Jones
STAGE CREW	Bill Beton, Darren Broadhurst, Frank Needham, Rich Nicholson, Gareth Trimble, Alex Connolly, Louise Jones, Hannah Dawson
SET & CAR HIRE	Scenery Solutions
LIGHTING DESIGN & OPERATION	Megan Ashbrook
SOUND & TECH HIRE	MSL
COSTUMES SUPPLIED BY	Costume Solutions, AWMTTC, Sparks Dramatic Society
WARDROBE	Louise Byron
PUBLICITY	Katy Thomason-Stewart & Hannah Young
FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGEMENT	Jill Thomason-Stewart
TICKET SECRETARY	Jill Thomason-Stewart
PROGRAMME	Katy Thomason-Stewart
CHAPERONE LOGISTICS	Clare Draper

## COMMITTEE

CHAIR	Derek Swain
SECRETARY	Bill Brown
TREASURER	Jill Thomason-Stewart, Clare Draper - co-opted
TECH LIAISON	Megan Ashbrook
REGISTRAR	Rebecca Davies
MARKETING	Katy Thomason-Stewart, Hannah Young - co-opted

## CAST LIST

Caractacus Potts	Ben MacKenzie
Jeremy Potts	Sebastian Salernitano (Tuesday & Friday) Harry Muscant (Wednesday & Saturday Evening) Lewis Furness (Thursday & Saturday Matinee)
Jemima Potts	Lola Smith (Tuesday & Friday) Lily Sidley (Wednesday & Saturday Evening) Ella Crosthwaite (Thursday & Saturday Matinee)
Truly Scrumptious	Francesca Bowman
Child Catcher, Sid / Junkman	Will Vickers
Grandpa Potts	Derek Swain
Baron Bomburst	Bradley Snelling
Baroness Bomburst	Joanne Burton
Boris	Jess Bray
Goran	Katy Thomason-Stewart
Lord Scrumptious, Inventor	Bill Brown
Toymaker, Coggins, Inventor	Callum Burton
Chef, Inventor	Scott Walker
Inventor, Ensemble	Alison Williams
Turkey Farmer, Inventor, Ensemble	David Lambert
Miss Phillips' Assistant, Ensemble	Rhona Andrews
Miss Phillips, Ensemble	Gemma Bowker

## THE CHILDREN

Toby	Max Salernitano (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday Matinee) Perry Bowker (Wednesday, Friday, Saturday Evening)
Marta	Emma Wallis (Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday Matinee) Emmy Rourke (Wednesday, Friday, Saturday Evening)
Greta	Arabella Winstanley (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday Matinee) Charlotte Tarus (Wednesday, Friday, Saturday Evening)

## ENSEMBLE

Stephen	Seth Bowman
Susan	Holly Robinson
	Abi Frost
	Jill Macleod
	Hannah Purdy

Izzy Timmis  
 Sophie Vlissidis  
 Anna Winstanley  
 Carol Barbe  
 Sarah Burke  
 Elaine Thorburn

## DANCERS

Louise Byron  
 Clare Draper  
 Ruby Smith  
 Leila Vigerstaff  
 Liz Window  
 Hannah Young

## THE BAND

KEYS 1	Andrew Saunders
KEYS 2	Simon Pickup
BASS	Guy Lightowler
DRUMS	Dan Bennett
REED 1	Kim Jameson
REED 2	Emily McArthur
REED 3	Mel Waddington
TRUMPET	Tony Armitstead
TROMBONE	Freddie Hughes
FRENCH HORN	Phil Taylor
PERCUSSION	John Gregory

DATE OF PERFORMANCE	Tuesday 18th, Wednesday 19th & Thursday 20th November 2025
DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	Saturday 22nd November 2025
ADJUDICATOR ID	NSA0001
NSA LOGO ON POSTER	Yes
NSA IN PROGRAMME	Yes
PROGRAMME CLASS	Best Licenced Design

## THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT

2253

STRONGEST ELEMENTS

### Powerful Performances

His  
versatile

- **Ben Mackenzie's** portrayal of Potts was natural and strong. characterisation, movement and vocals stood out. Having three sets of children to perform with proved he is a actor and developed great relationships with all six children.

### Technical Choices

- The quality of lamps used and quality of microphones sourced and hired gave this production clarity.

### Staging and Crewing

- The stage crew were slick, organised and managed a lot of set and scenery behind the scenes in a very small, cramped set of wings. They were focused, mostly quiet and very efficient throughout the performance.

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Normally when you review a production, you see one performance and a snapshot of the production run, however this week, due to multiple casts, I had the luxury, honour and privilege of attending thrice.

It was wonderful to see the society returning to their home venue, and I wish them every success in continuing their partnership with the leisure centre, especially given the shortage of theatre spaces locally. With the venue lacking its own technical resources, the society hired most of the set, scenery and all technical equipment, an impressive feat for the backstage team, who managed it all under significant pressure and tight time constraints.

Tuesday marked opening night, and a few teething problems were evident, including missing props, missed cues, the low smoke machine not working for two scenes (though it was up and running for the third and final scene), and a noticeable buzz on the PA system when the band wasn't playing. However, the dedicated team at Alderley and Wilmslow MTC had resolved all of these issues by the time I attended later performances.

The staging felt quite minimal in Act One, and with relatively few performers on stage at times, it did feel like a lot of space to fill. However, as the society had hired the full set and cloths as a package, the scenery came into its own in Act Two — particularly the toy shop, the Child Catcher's cart and the Baron's gifts. While this wasn't the fault of the society, it's disappointing that the hire company hadn't kept on top of maintenance, as some pieces looked a little tired and in need of touch-ups, especially the black trucks before a future hire.

That said, **Ilsa Connolly** and her stage crew managed the scene changes mostly seamlessly and without disruption, skillfully moving set pieces on and off (often with the help of cast members) and storing them in extremely limited backstage space, including the tiny wings and

the area around the band. Their methodical, well-organised approach – and clear expertise in backstage “Jenga” – was impressive. Most scene changes were done in blackouts with lights aimed into the audience. My only criticism of the entire crew was to be conscious of blackouts and lights up – on a couple of scenes, we saw crew members walking onto stage as the lights were still fading – efficiency is great, but being aware of this will keep the production a more professional feel. The car was well managed and was really effective and impressive – I also noticed that the society deliberately avoided sharing photos of the car in their recent online uploads, keeping it as a surprise for audiences on the night – which paid off brilliantly with cheers and applause when it was revealed.

On Tuesday evening, **Sebastian Salernitano** and **Lola Smith** took on the roles of Jeremy and Jemima Potts. With three pairs of children cast across the run, this first duo set a very strong standard. Sebastian performed with confidence, focus and clear commitment to his character, showing he had spent considerable time developing the role. He stayed fully in the moment, responding naturally within each scene and demonstrating strong reactive acting skills. Lola was equally confident, delivered lovely mannerisms and had particularly delightful vocals. Together, they were authentic, engaging and completely believable in their performances.

The show was well directed, with every area of the stage used effectively to represent different locations. The stage was kept busy without feeling cluttered when lots of cast were on stage, and **Joe Clarke**'s creative flair, vision and energy were evident in the pacing throughout. I did, however, notice a few actors breaking character as they exited – possibly due to the limited space in the wings. Still, it's important to stay in character all the way offstage; similarly waiting for full blackout before moving – if you're strutting off, keep the posture and movement going until you're fully clear. So much work goes into building these characters, and that attention to detail makes a big difference with character execution.

**Bradley Snelling** and **Joanne Burton** took on the roles of the Baron and Baroness, two wonderfully exaggerated characters that audiences love to hate. Bradley maintained a strong, consistent accent and solid characterisation throughout. He was light on his feet, clearly considered his movement, shuffles and posture, and delivered his lines at a good pace, making him thoroughly entertaining to watch as his character is so uxorious to the Baroness. Joanne's overbearing, larger-than-life interpretation was equally impressive. She sustained her high-pitched accent and vocal tone throughout, with particularly strong diction despite the challenge of the voice. Her performance was convincing and fully committed, while both actors brought infectious energy to the stage, generating plenty of laughter and giggles from the audience.

**Derek Swain**, the society's Chair, brought strong mannerisms, posture and characterisation to his portrayal of Grandpa Potts. He delivered his musical numbers confidently, although at times his verses were slightly overpowered by the band. I would encourage him to project his vocals with the same strength and confidence that he brings to his acting, particularly during those sections. His performance generated plenty of laughter, and it was clear he had a strong understanding of his character's purpose within the show.

Despite covering multiple roles, **Will Vickers'** portrayal of the Child Catcher stood out. His first reveal during the power cut – underlit with a torch – was particularly effective, immediately capturing the character's sinister presence. He delivered strong vocal work and committed characterisation, supported by controlled, lurking movement throughout. His accent, husky tone and menacing attitude were perfectly suited to the role, with younger audience members visibly recoiling and clutching their parents – exactly the reaction you'd hope for.

**Harry Muscant** and **Lily Sidley** played Jeremy and Jemima on Wednesday. Harry portrayed the character very sweetly and was very angelic. His rendition of Truly Scrumptious paired with Lily was a joy to watch. Lily was very confident, smiling throughout, engaging with her scenes and had very strong vocals. Both did a Naturalistic performance and I can't wait to see them at future productions.

**Callum Burton** was an absolute delight to watch on stage. He had multiple characters and it was evident he had embodied different postures, mannerisms and movements for each. He was also one of the dancers in 'Me 'Ol Bam-Boo' before quickly running off for another costume change and character. He had good structure and pace to his delivery of his dialogue, sang well, performed confidently and lit up the stage with his energy.

Playing the comedic spies Boris and Goran were **Jess Bray** and **Katy Thomason-Stewart**. Jess delivered a confident performance, fully embodied in the role with strong projection throughout. Katy was equally committed, embracing the character's silliness with exaggerated mannerisms, expressive facial work and deliberately daft movements across the stage. Together, they made a highly entertaining pairing, demonstrating excellent comic timing and delivery. Their standout moments were clearly intentional and added a great deal of light, uplifting humour to the production.

On Thursday evening, I saw the last pair with **Lewis Furness** and **Ella Crosthwaite** portraying Jeremy and Jemima in the spotlight. Lewis had good projection and confidence, his projected whispers about the choke were humorous and Ella was sweet, innocent and angelic and both sang wonderfully.

**Francesca Bowman** delivered a confident performance as Truly, with clear diction, strong vocals and a convincing upper-class accent throughout. Her rendition of 'Lovely Lonely Man' was a particular highlight, holding the audience in complete silence and rapt attention. She showed good control over her vocal tone, and while her interpretation occasionally leaned more towards forceful than gentle, it remained effective. Her movement as the music box doll was clearly well rehearsed, and she maintained strong focus throughout.

**Ben MacKenzie** took on the lead role of Caractacus Potts and truly commanded the stage in every scene he appeared in. His diction, accent, characterisation, projection and posture all contributed to a convincing and authentic portrayal of a character so familiar and well loved. He carried the role with confidence, warmth and presence, moving with natural charisma and delivering his performance with consistent energy and enthusiasm throughout the entire production.

His connection with his onstage family felt completely natural, creating a genuine sense of warmth and believability, particularly in the quieter, more intimate scenes. He struck a strong balance between the character's eccentricity and sincerity, making the emotional moments just as impactful as the lighter ones.

It was abundantly clear that Ben had dedicated many hours to rehearsals and character development, and that hard work paid off on stage. His commitment, attention to detail and strong stage presence ensured he anchored the production effectively, and his performance did not go unnoticed by the audience, who responded warmly throughout.

The Musical Director, **Ed Nurse**, did a wonderful job. The band (although unfortunately hidden) were well managed and the vocals were uplifting. It was lovely to see the band also featured a percussionist.

The Choreography, by **Rebecca Davies**, was effective, fun and busy. Me 'Ol Bamboo and the Samba were highlights and most dancers kept the pace and timing correctly with huge smiles and grins in their performance. I would have liked to have seen a little more adventurous choreography go through to the Ensemble too as it was a little mismatched during 'Toot Sweets' and unfortunately, some Ensemble characters weren't as confident as others with the movement. The Ensemble as a whole had great smiles, were engaged with scenes and had good reactive acting. A stand out performer was **Hannah Young** who was seen to throw 110% of effort into her ensemble/dancer characters with her smile, enthusiasm, reactive acting skills and passion in her performance. I genuinely hope to see her in a Principal Role in the near future.

I would like to see the society take their character presentation even further by making greater use of makeup in the future. At times, some performers appeared a little washed out under the lighting, and the inventors, in particular, could have benefited from makeup being applied to their bald caps so they blended more naturally with their skin tone and overall complexion. Although I really did love 'The Roses of Success' which was thoroughly entertaining, I felt that stronger use of makeup could have further enhanced the realism of the scene, while also providing a great opportunity for the society to upskill and develop its members with valuable new techniques for future productions.

Having seen multiple performances, my only suggestion to the entire company would be to remain mindful as confidence grows over the run, ensuring that ad-libbing doesn't creep in, as a couple of moments came close to breaking the fourth wall.

The costumes were effective, well sourced, colour balanced and lovely and bright for the sweet factory. For such a big cast, this is no easy task and the team should be really proud of sourcing them all ensuring they were appropriate and well fitting. They really enhanced the production.

The sound was clear and generally very well balanced throughout, with only a couple of minor hiccups that didn't disrupt the overall performance. At times, performers began speaking while still in the wings instead of waiting until they were fully on stage, but the MSL team responded quickly and efficiently to bring microphones up as needed.

Lighting design by **Megan Ashbrook** was no small task, particularly given that the entire rig had to be installed from scratch in this venue and programmed within a very short timeframe. While some cues could have benefited from smoother position or beam-shape fades to make them feel slightly slicker, Megan demonstrated clear skill in both operating the rig and spotting the action on stage effectively.

The production featured several scenic cloths, which the rig was unfortunately limited in fully complementing. Due to the height of the venue, many of the lamps were positioned quite directly overhead, meaning the cloths weren't always lit to their full potential. This is a challenge to consider for future productions, perhaps through lighting from further back or using more low-level uplighting to enhance the cloths and reduce facial shadows, particularly for cast members wearing hats and headpieces directly under lights.

Nevertheless, it was evident that Megan invested a great deal of time, care and effort into the lighting design and operation of the LED's, and she should be commended for her precision and commitment. Hopefully, with additional funding for more equipment in the future, she will be able to make even greater use of her clear technical ability.

I would like to extend my thanks to the wonderful team at Alderley and Wilmslow for an enjoyable and engaging production, with a special mention to Jill for her warm hospitality. It was great to see such healthy audiences across the run, even if not quite at full capacity, and their social media promotion in the lead-up was engaging – I even spotted one of the roadside banners en route to the venue, still standing proudly after Storm Claudia!

Supporting local theatre is vital in keeping amateur performance alive, and the passion this company has for being on stage was evident throughout. I was slightly disappointed, however, to see a number of audience members taking photos and filming during the performances across all three nights. This is something the society may wish to address more firmly in the future to ensure proper theatre etiquette is upheld.

Thank you once again – I wish you every success for the remainder of the run and look forward to returning again soon.

## PHOTOGRAPHS







## PROGRAMME

**A W M T C**  
ALDERLEY & WILMSLOW  
MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY  
presents....

BY FLEMING'S  
**CHITTY CHITTY  
BANG BANG**

Music and Lyrics by  
**Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman**

Music by Special Arrangement with Sony/ATV Publishing  
Adapted for the Stage by Jeremy Sams

Based on the MGM Motion Picture  
Licensed Script Adapted by Ray Roderick

**18-22 November 2025**  
**The Evans Theatre, Wilmslow**

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**NODA**  
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**Northern Stage**

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All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTI [www.mtishows.co.uk](http://www.mtishows.co.uk)