

# *Pinocchio, Divas, Pintellos...and More!*

by Paul Myrvold

## **SOUTH VALLEY CIVIC THEATRE**

### *Pinocchio*

**W**ith *Pinocchio*, South Valley Civic Theatre has mounted a nearly ideal production of a musical ideally geared for young performers. Carlo Collodi's old tale of a wooden puppet's struggle to become a real little boy, best known to most by the Disney animated feature, gets interpreted by an enthusiastic, talented cast of 39 kids ages 7 to 14. Adapted by Jim Eiler and Jeanne Bargy, the music is tuneful and cheerful, the script lean and tight (Pinocchio runs an hour, thirty minutes including intermission), and the characters and situations entertaining.

All the performers just beam with the pleasure of it all, from villagers to leads. As always some must be singled out. When Pinocchio is first carried on stage, one can't be sure if the puppet is a wooden prop all loose joints and angles or a real actor. It is hard to imagine a better or more delightful Pinocchio than **Bridget Harnett**, a fourth grader in only her second show. With the coltish quality and wobbly knees of a creature used to the controlling security of a puppeteer, she gapes with wonder at her new freedom and the joy of life; she makes an amazingly endearing Pinocchio.

**Connor Clark** throws himself with abandon into playing the old puppet master Gepetto. Sporting a convincing grey mustache (one of many convincing mustaches to be seen in the show), he creaks his voice a bit, bends his knees, and

slumps from effect of decades of gravity.

Antonio the Carpenter (an able **Dominick Lucido**) serves as the storyteller and master of ceremonies for the show. **McKenna Miles** makes a lovely Blue Fairy, all swirls and kindness as she helps Pinocchio through the many pitfalls of his progress to humanity. And she always gets a laugh on her exit with a stylish shrug, kick and tilt of the head.

**Nicole La Jeunesse** and **Callie Camacho-Light** were fun as the bad boys Candlewick and Gino who lure Pinocchio to the dark side of truancy and pleasure. A black mustache, a cape and a whip turned **Marcus Pereira** into a commanding, sinister coachman. And **Kathryn McGill** and **Bailey Konold** were delightful as Signore Gatto (the Cat) and Signore Volpone (the Fox), especially in their pseudo-operatic number "Growl Meow."

*Pinocchio* is ably produced by confident people who know what they are doing. Director **Carol Harris** knows music, musical theater and has vast experience as a performer, director and a teacher. She has the surest touch with children and gets them to give their all and to go with bold, theatrical choices. **Mitzie Imagawa** draws on her long experience to create inventive choreography suited to the skill level and experience of her dancers.

The costumes, designed by the multitasking

**Carol Harris** and constructed by parents, according to the producers **Loritta Bonfante Johnson** and **Terri Miles**, are wonderfully whimsical and eye pleasing. (I loved Signore Gatto's knee length tie.) The sets were attractive too, but a few long set changes, a frequent problem for SVCT, interrupts the flow of action, the only negative that keeps the show from being fully ideal.

You don't have to bring a child to thoroughly enjoy this production. It's a delightful time for any theatre lover.

*Pinocchio* plays through May 3 at the Playhouse in Morgan Hill.

# 'Pinocchio' comes to South Valley

Morgan Hill Times

Bill Hudson

Posted: Thursday, April 10, 2008 12:00 am | Updated: 11:44 am, Wed Dec 28, 2011.



The full cast sings "That's a Show" during dress rehearsals for South Valley Civic Theatre production of "Pinocchio" Wednesday night.



McKenna Miles and Bridget Harnett rehearse Wednesday night in South Valley Civic Theater's production of 'Pinocchio'.