

## THE GMS MINSTRELS 30 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG!

'Minstrels' as early as 1350 was a generic term for wandering entertainers, itinerant bands of players who performed songs, drama and farce. There is evidence of the importance of minstrels from the earliest times in Europe down to the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Queen Elizabeth declared minstrels to be rogues and vagabonds.

The GMS Minstrels are unique on the Central Coast and form a genuine part of the minstrel tradition.

Around thirty venues book us each year so most months see us doing 3 gigs in different localities. The members of the troupe are longstanding loyal, committed and hardworking. We run each show without an announcer so every member has to be alert to the running order enabling smooth coordination of entrances and exits., Each performer is responsible for his or her own costumes, props, transport and we use no pre-recorded music or mime.



There is an immediacy in our shows which seems to delight our audiences! We use few props and no scenery. We create condensed versions of famous musicals conjuring up the narrative and the moods and dreams of the characters in

costume, choreography and live music. Themed segments such as *Seaside* and *Music Hall* are also part of our repertoire. One complete show lasting approx. 1 hour and 10 minutes would consist of four or five popular musical segments such as *South Pacific*, *Brigadoon*, *Guys & Dolls* or *Oklahoma*, interspersed with solos, duos and comedy numbers giving variety and costuming changing time.

This is quite rigorous theatre at a grassroots level and the ephemeral nature of our shows as we come and go leaves nothing behind but the odd fallen sequin and some colourful memories. However; Gershwin, Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hammerstein and many other composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century produced songs with great staying power and they are like old friend to our audiences.

The GMS Minstrels would like to invite you all to share in celebrating our vitality and longevity as a performing group.

