



Finnish Prisoner a triumph

A COMMUNITY opera performed in Lewes has received some fantastic reviews and all seven shows were a sell out.

The Finnish Prisoner, by Orlando Gough and Stephen Plaice, told the story of the Finnish prisoners who were kept in Lewes Naval Prison during the Crimean War.

In addition to eight Finnish singers, who played the eponymous prisoners, the production was viewed by a number of Finnish dignitaries, including the Finnish Ambassador and a representative from the Finnish Government. About 60 local children also took part.

Susannah Waters, from the Paddock Production Company which put together the ambitious project with the help of funding from the Arts Council and a host of other organisations, said: "The show was sold out every evening and there was a queue for returns for every single performance. 'People have been full of praise and were amazed at the show we put on.

'Lots of people came down from Glyndebourne and were blown away by it, and from our point of view it was great to get the thumbs up from our big brother opera house up the road!'

The opera was performed at a warehouse on the Phoenix Industrial Estate which was miraculously transformed into a great venue in just a few months. The Paddock production company gave their thanks to Charles Style, the man behind the controversial proposed development in the North Street area, who allowed them to use the warehouse.

There are plans for further performances in Finland in 2008 and the company has promised more productions for in Lewes in the near future.



Above and top, scenes from the Finnish Prisoner