



Society : HARINGEY & SOUTHGATE DISTRICT SCOUTS/LONDON PANTOMIMERS
Production : CINDERELLA
Date : 08/12/2005
Venue : INTIMATE THEATRE
Report by : PAUL M HOLGATE

Report

A traditional presentation of the well-known tale with a number of in-jokes and a few modern touches.

Many of the familiar plot elements were underplayed. This had the effect of reducing the importance of both the Fairy Godmother, soundly played by Kathryn O'Shea and Dandini, an able performance from Wendy Jones who gave a good rendition of 'Is this the way to...' in Act II.

Fiona Caswell as the prince and Annabel Hay as Cinderella were also both rather understated. To be fair, the leads in pantomime are rarely the most interesting characters. Both had clear singing voices and they were well matched. The act I duet was somewhat dreary and seemed out of place.

The transformation of the pumpkin and animals was well done. The substitution of Cinderella for her double very effective although the switch-back suffered from overkill, being covered by a cloak, a pyro *and* a blackout.

Costumes were colourful and well selected. Lighting was effective with cues well followed - do remember to use a stronger filter when spotting in the audience.

Musical support under the direction of Steve Jones was well balanced. Some amusing bits of business for the orchestra was a nice touch.

Chorus reactions were very good. Choreography was simple and effective -some of the chorus members could perhaps be encouraged to tackle some more demanding steps. The inclusion of a few 'party pieces' during the ball scene was a good idea.

Graham Bell and Martin Brock as Stoop and Scoop were adept at handling the audience and worked well together on stage. It was good to see a little more slapstick this year including several well-executed pratfalls. Chris Foster as the Broker was suitably evil but was disappointingly absent from the stage for a lot of the time.

Ian James and David Stone were also well matched, and extremely ugly sisters. Including a good performance of 'In These Shoes'. Vogue, and the boudoir scene worked very well. The Act I scullery scene was incredibly busy with a lot going on including much inventive humour.

Rebecca Grodentz seemed a little too benevolent to be called a 'wicked' stepmother. She used her considerable vocal talent with good effect in her Act II solo. She was well matched to Colin Paris's avuncular Baron Stoneybroke.

Steven Sumner as Buttons also provided a heartfelt solo - the high spot of a very engaging and energetic performance, very well played.

Ann Kent and Sharon Austin provided great support as Horace the Horse. Nicely coordinated dancing - including cramp-rolls! Well done.

Michael Bennett made a distinctive king with an interesting character, well matched by Anne-Marie Jones as the Queen. Andy Stevens, however, stole all of the court scenes as Bodkin the Butler.

A well-designed programme gave comprehensive cast notes and an interesting history of the company. Thank you for including a Noda acknowledgment.

Congratulations on an entertaining show and many thanks for your invitation and your hospitality. I look forward to seeing you again next year.