

# National Operatic & Dramatic Association



**Society** LONDON PANTOMIMERS  
**Production** ALI BABA & THE FORTY THIEVES  
**Date** 14/12/2006  
**Venue** INTIMATE THEATRE  
**Report by** PAUL M HOLGATE

## Report

A retelling of the traditional story with a few variations from the plot.

Musical support, under the direction of Steve Jones, was excellent with a good balance between the pit and the stage. Musical numbers were well selected. We particularly enjoyed 'You can get away with anything', 'Rich Girl' and 'Buttons'. The number from Bugsy Malone was also very well done.

Direction was sound though Act I tended to drag. The pace picked up considerably in the second act, which seemed to have rather clearer plotting.

Chorus was generally well drilled and dance numbers looked very good. Be sure to pay attention to basic stage-craft. Mass exits looked very cramped on occasions though I appreciate you have a large number of people to move from a small stage. One of the thieves was wearing a wrist watch in the first act.

Costumes were well selected and colourful. It was certainly topical to include the Dalek. The camel costume, too, was ingenious and the operators kept to a distinctive 'camel-gait'.

Lighting was well plotted and performers were adequately lit.

Audience participation was done well. – a simple song that did not outstay its welcome.

Colin Paris was an engaging Ali Baba. Ian James' Dame Babs was truly on form – a tremendous performance.

Martin Brock was rather too nice to be truly diabolical though he had a great solo which, deservedly, brought the house down.

Ben Burman, in a very promising debut, and Steven Sumner as Robber 1 and Robber 2 were very entertaining and both deserved more stage time.

Graham Bell and Dick Sams as Thirty Nine and Forty provided some great comedy – with some decidedly peculiar make-up.

Zosia Heller, playing Abdullah had good stage presence and was well matched with Lucy Murphy who clearly enjoyed the part of Morgiana.

Also well matched were Michael Kent as Cassim and Ruth Heatherly as Salome who had some very inventive comic business.

The programme was both clear and made interesting reading. Thank you for including the NODA crest.

I note from the biographies in the programme that a large number of the principle cast were making their stage debut. This is very encouraging.

This was an energetic and most enjoyable production. Thank you for your invitation and your hospitality. I look forward to seeing you again next year.