

Jack and the Beanstalk (Panto)

Date

8th December 2018

Society

The Wranglers Theatre Company

Venue

The Muse Theatre

Type of Production

Pantomime

Director

Wendy Holmes

Musical Director

n/a

Choreographers

Wendy Holmes & Ricky-Lee White

Report

The Wranglers' production of "Jack and the Beanstalk", written by Panto king Geoff Coventry, was very much the traditional family pantomime, with lovely colourful costumes, effective scenery and lots of good singing, dancing and comedy throughout.

Directed by Wendy Holmes, the cast included a good performance by Josh Cook as Jack, who also sang very well, and Jennie Farmer as a lovely Jill.

Gareth Davis, as Dame Trott, produced his usual excellent comedic performance, albeit with some lost lines along the way, and once again had a great rapport with the audience. He was partnered in his comedy capers by Jonathan Clarke as a very good Simple Simon, who also had a good rapport with the audience which is a necessity in this type of role.

The principal villain of the piece was, of course, the unseen Giant, with Geoff Coventry in good form as his sidekick, Fleshcreep. This device was played with a wonderful mixture of malevolence and comedy. Representing good v evil, we had the 'Wicked'-inspired witches, Elphaba and Glinda, played elegantly and with style by Georgia Parnell and Kerry Hore. Jim Byrne completed the main principal line-up as Squire Glum, with Rebecca Marshall and Carly Salisbury combining to create Buttercup the Cow!

Other entertaining performances included a whole array of characters from Fairytale Land, played by many members of the company – too many to name – but all playing recognizable characters and interacting in a fun way.

The large chorus was made up of adults and children of all age groups, who supported the principal cast very well and performed the contemporary choreography with energy and enthusiasm, appearing to be enjoying themselves immensely - it was great to see so many children being encouraged to take part once again with some lovely moments of comedy and cuteness.

Generally, diction and clarity of words was very good, and the pace picked up as the show went on. Sometimes there were dropped lines, but we all experience this in performance and I always think it's more important how an actor recovers themselves and/or the scene, if lines are lost or a scene loses its way. In panto this adds to the fun.

There were smooth transitions between scenes, with good technical input - well done to Stage Manager John Little, the Stage Crew, Props and Technical crew. Costumes were very colourful and just right, fitting the story excellently. I am always impressed by the work of the Wranglers' Wardrobe department, in this case Sue McLoughlin and Angie Wilson. Brilliant costumes!

Musical accompaniment was backing tracks, which worked well and were played at a balanced sound level – although sometimes voices were not clearly projected.

Congratulations to Director/Choreographer Wendy Holmes, co-choreographer Ricky-Lee White and to all involved in bringing to the stage this enjoyable pantomime which the audience enjoyed very much. Thank you for inviting me again - I had a memorable evening.

Gareth Davies
NODA SW District 3

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

Tel 01733374790 **Fax** 01733237286 **Email** info@noda.org.uk **Web** www.noda.org.uk

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