

Somerset Fellowship of Drama Cinderella Trophy Competition

Friday Matinee 27th December 2018

Introduction

I was looking forward to my first adjudication of the season and after the over indulgence of the past few days and a rest from my own panto rehearsals, a Friday afternoon at the theatre seemed just the thing to round off my Christmas. My wife and I were warmly greeted by Mary Parker the producer and having collected our tickets and a programme at the box office we were ready for an entertaining afternoon. Looking around me in the foyer and bar area it was clear that the audience were there to enjoy themselves too, little girls in special outfits, I noticed Anna from frozen, and an array of various headdresses including one lady sporting a turkey on her head.

Taking our seats in the balcony it was nice to hear music in the back ground which is something other societies should take note of.

Script

This was an original script by Matthew Maisey and a new pantomime for me. Full of comedy, music and all the essential ingredients for a family pantomime this promised to be an entertaining show.

Production

This was a good interpretation of the script. Full use was made of the stage and varied entrances from the wings as well as some entrances through the auditorium.

After a short prologue with a very strange fortune teller he introduced the baddy to us and prompted the booing of this character, the Ring Master. The opening number, 'Blame it on the Boogie', was bright and lively and introduced us to a competent set of dancers and a young chorus.

I wasn't aware of any prompts although there were a few hesitant pauses at times. This being only the third performance I feel certain that these little issues would have been ironed out as the performances continued. Apart from this the cue bite was sound and lines delivered in a clear and confident manner. The dancers and junior chorus moved well together with principals giving this a well-rehearsed performance.

Casting a show like this can be difficult. How do you make a bear into a dame for a start! All characters seemed well cast and being a musical society were in fine vocal tune.

Lighting was imaginative although occasionally a little dark. I struggled to see the detail on some of the faces especially mummy bear in her longer wig. On the other hand the UV scene didn't seem quite dark enough. This was just an observation and not a criticism.

Sound effects worked well and on time. The music also added appeal to the various chase scenes.

The house song performed by the comedy double of Splat and Tumble, with the help of some lucky golden ticket holders, could have been brisker as the show was now well over the usual two and a half hours. I have always loved to witness the hurling of sweets into the audience but was under the impression that these days with health and safety rules societies are no longer permitted to do this. It may well be worth checking out.

Directing any pantomime is a difficult task. When you have written it and are also performing in the show, it becomes even more so. Well done Matthew.

Stage Management

I understand the sets were mostly hired and were in keeping with the circus theme. The bear's cottage was charming and front of tabs scenes worked well. Scene changes were quiet and handled with efficiency.

Music

The choice of music is an important addition to any pantomime and I am sure the choices here were difficult as this was an original script. However, you succeeded to choose a selection of suitable songs and managed to incorporate the Baby Shark song, the current children's favourite. Well done Shaun.

Choreography

The choreography was kept simple and suited the junior chorus with the dancers taking a more experienced line of choreography. All moved very well and were well rehearsed. Congratulations Lucy.

Costumes & Makeup

Costumes, although hired, in the main were colourful and fitted well. I liked the rainbow themed finale giving a real circus feel. I was glad to see a couple of costume changes for the Dame/Mummy Bear as it is traditional for her to be in a different costume with each entrance. Make up was well applied and the Bears in particular was imaginative although as stated before, I wasn't always able to see Mummy bears face because of the long wig. If she was wearing lashes I wasn't able to see them and would have liked a little more of a feminine appearance to her.

Romance

Although there was not a tremendous amount of romance going on between the leads of Goldilocks and Gilbert their one duet was very well performed. The romance seemed to be more between the Mummy and Daddy Bear.

Villain

The Ring master was our villain here and was getting all the boo's right from the start. However, I did feel this character could have reacted a little more, establishing a greater rapport with his audience.

Comedy

Comedy is one of the main basics of Pantomime and this show was certainly not lacking in the quick fire jokes. Maybe a little too much 'loo' humour for me and not keen on the spitting but that's just a personal observation. There was a plethora of comics in this panto Lenny Scoop, Splat and Tumble, Mummy Bear and the strange character Lief Overs. The slapstick scene when making porridge looked a little under-rehearsed and there seemed to be a lot of ad-libbing going on. I know from experience that these scenes are always difficult to master in the confines of a rehearsal room but can be excellent if slick and well-rehearsed.

Performance

Goldilocks (Daisy Gray) This was a delightful performance with the right amount of feistiness mixed with her compassion to try and change her uncle's view on animal performing. You had a very nice singing voice which complimented Gilbert's voice too in the duet 'Suddenly'. Well done Daisy.

Gilbert (Elisha Webster) A good characterisation and you looked the part. Partnered well with Daisy you also have a delightful singing voice as shown in the duet 'Suddenly' and very clear diction. A good performance Elisha.

Whipcrack (Matt Turner) You really looked the part of the Villain in your ringmaster's costume. A really good characterisation with a nice deep voice and strong singing voice also. I did feel you might have had more rapport with the audience as they were keen to boo you from the start. Very well done Matt.

Lenny Scoop (Christian Lockyer) You were full of energy and a very likeable link man. Very clear diction and a good singing voice too. You certainly kept within character throughout. Although it's good to be able to ad-lib in difficult situations when things go wrong, just be careful not to overdo it. A competent performance though. Well done Christian.

Lief Overs (Matty Wilson) You were a master of disguise and accents for the multiple roles required and a good comic with sound timing. Another good singing voice and clear diction delivered in a confident manner. An enjoyable performance Matty.

Baby Bear (Bethany Baker) An energetic performance full of enthusiasm for the dance as shown in Baby's Dream scene with the company. A competent performance. Many congratulations Bethany.

Daddy Bear (Dave Bonser) A competent performance from confident performer. Your duet with mummy bear was very enjoyable and you kept up your characterisation throughout. Nicely played Dave.

Mummy Bear (Glynn Webster) This was a character I was looking forward to seeing, combining an animal with the iconic character of Dame. Were you going to be a bloke in a skin or a bear in a frock! You managed to combine both and it was evident that the kids adored you especially when you were getting them to roar. Although the make-up was very bear-like, as mentioned before, a little more feminine look would have been my preference. A very good performance indeed Glynn.

Splat & Tumble (Tris Hann & Matthew Maisey) These two worked well together and had good comedy timing. At times their corny jokes seemed to go on a bit too long and felt like they were trying to outdo Tim Vine as to how many jokes they could get into a panto! But saying that the children loved the ones they understood. Both were very energetic and remained so to the end. Well done Tris and Matthew.

Dancers A very talented dance troupe which complimented the company performance. I did feel for the poor girl who got pied but hope you get your revenge on Lenny!

Chorus I believe it was team B that were performing on Friday afternoon. This team were well rehearsed and provided good singing in the company numbers and all moved well. I'm sure Team A are equally as well rehearsed. A good all round performance.

Summary

I am certain that the audience left having had a very enjoyable afternoon even if it did run a little longer than it should have. It was a surprise to see you all lined up in costume as we left.

Personally I prefer to keep the magic on stage but appreciate that this may be an ongoing tradition that you do. Thank you for inviting us and I hope the rest of your run is successful for you.

Ray Jarvis

Adjudicator – Somerset Fellowship of Drama