

<i>Report for:</i>	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>
<i>Written by:</i>	<i>Alan P. Frayn</i>
<i>Director:</i>	<i>Brian Epps</i>
<i>Musical Director:</i>	<i>Shaun Rigby</i>
<i>Choreographer:</i>	<i>Shelley Smith</i>
<i>Performed by:</i>	<i>Glastonbury & Street Musical Comedy Society</i>
<i>Venue:</i>	<i>Strode Theatre</i>
<i>When:</i>	<i>28th November 2019</i>
<i>Reviewed by:</i>	<i>Leigh Conley, SW Representative District 8</i>

Any observation made by the reviewer can only be based on what they see at the performance in question. The reviewer may have received information in advance of the performance and it is inevitable that their assessment will be affected by that knowledge.

The N.O.D.A. Representative's intention is to give an objective critique of the overall production and in particular the performance viewed. It should be remembered that any review of this nature can only be objective as far as the techniques used during the performance observed. Any criticisms expressed may not have been valid at other performances, and are only made to encourage higher standards in Amateur Theatre.

It is hoped that the audience's appreciation of your efforts will have given everyone a lift and encouraged you to greater achievements in the future and that the observations made by the reviewer will prove helpful in improving future productions.

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

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Congratulations for yet again being able to put on a show so soon after Christmas, it must be a lot of hard work to organise at this time of year.

The script by Alan P. Frayn was good in the respect that it ticked many of the Panto boxes, although there was no obvious slapstick scene, jokes and silly one liners came thick and fast but unfortunately some of them didn't land as well as they could. I find this happens quite regularly in a Panto, however this time it wasn't just due to the quality of jokes there was also some rushed and poorly delivered lines. This wasn't the case all the way through though and there were some lovely jokes including several about the King's PANTIES. While the scene with the invitation address' was very funny indeed and was delivered (no pun intended) incredibly well.

The staging for this production was very simple and mostly achieved through the use of beautiful backdrops. This was a great idea and kept the story ticking along at a decent pace, apart from one moment when we went from 'Back to the party' to 'A recipe for disaster' which seemed to take a long time to set even though there wasn't much to it. Unfortunately, there were a few instances of blocking which obscured some of the action (admittedly I was sat in the side seats which may have exaggerated this). Something different in this panto was the use of a live camera feed, whenever the Dame ventured into the audience. This was a really nice and unusual addition and it meant the audience didn't miss any of the fun when the Dame was out of their eye line.

The lighting for this production was well done, with lots of bright colours which really helped the scenes pop, unfortunately some of these lighting set up's did put the top half of people's faces into shadow, although I don't personally mind that as it adds a bit of atmosphere. The spot operator was a little bit slow picking up people sometimes as well, but again this is a really minor point. The sound on the other hand was a bit hit and miss and there were clearly some mic issues in the first half, although these looked to be resolved by the second act. I have to say that I found it difficult to hear a few of the performers lines and I also found it hard to pick up some of the solo singers words.

The costumes make up and wigs were very panto-esque and fitted the production incredibly well, no one looked out of place or (unintentionally) silly and it was nice to see the Dame with several costume changes. I particularly liked the synchronicity of the finale outfits, well done to Di Gifford and Liz Bradwell for getting suitable and well-fitting costumes for everyone in what was quite a large cast.

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How nice to see a live orchestra, it always adds a bit more to a production when they are not relying on backing tracks. It was also nice to see the performers interact with the conductor, Shaun Rigby. A few wrong notes and occasionally the tempo being a little slow aside, the orchestra performed well and supported the singers, however every now and then they were just a little too loud and overpowered the solo performers.

The Choreography by Shelley Smith was energetic and varied and executed really well by all the cast who looked like they all knew every dance inside and out, except for the Dame but I am sure this was all part of the characterisation. The fact that everyone knew all the dance moves was particularly impressive as there were a considerable number of them, some of which were quite long (though not in a bad way).

The song choices were interesting and some of them were very unique indeed. It was great to see 'Revoltin' Children' added to a pantomime and it was used very well. Emma Powell, as Prince Alexis, had a lovely singing voice and performed some beautiful harmonies with ease. Becky Cook as Good Fairy Lilac also showcased some good strong vocals. Unfortunately, on the odd occasion, some of the songs did seem to be pitched a little out of reach for some of the singers, which is a shame as they proved that they do have good singing ability in other numbers.

The cast for this show really did look like they were having a good time all the way through, especially Jo Turley as Queen Marigold, who just seemed to be having a blast. The principal cast all did a sterling job with their characterisations and bounced off each other well. Matty Wilson and Glynn Webster, as Fetch and Carry, did a great job as the comedy duo and seemed to have a good repartee with each other. Christian Lockyer and Cherry Lewis, as Muddles and Witch Hazel, did a very good job of getting the audience involved (which seemed particularly hard the night we came). Dave Titchener worked hard on his role as Dame Hettie but did seem a little uncomfortable at times, his interactions with 'Ian' were very good.

Backing up the principals were the junior chorus; the rainbow fairies and the senior dancers, these guys all did a really good job of supporting the action, whilst projecting their own individual characters. As with many Panto's the children were exceptionally good and I am sure we saw some future principals among them. The senior dancers were superb, particularly impressive was Olivia Cave whose dancing was very graceful and elegant. The other person that really stood out was Anna Gifford whose dancing was also

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perfect but she also did a fantastic job of reacting to every single thing that happened with some great facial expressions.

Overall, this was another enjoyable panto from Glastonbury and Street Musical Comedy Society. Admittedly, I didn't think this was the best panto I have seen from them but it was still of an incredibly high standard and had one of the best finale's I have ever seen in a pantomime, we had lots of bright colours; songs we all knew and a cascade of confetti what more could we ask for? I had a great time, well done to everybody.

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