



# National Operatic & Dramatic Association

## London Area Report

My thanks to KAREN WHIFFEN for the invitation to review your latest production. I enjoy coming to Faringdon, as over the years, you have cultivated a strong community bond, and this is evident to all in the audience, and with the enthusiasm shown by those on stage.

WRITER /DIRECTOR - PETER WEBSTER: had struck the right chord with his pantomime, It had all the ingredients required to keep the audience interested, especially the children, and this was very evident on Friday evening, by the mass of Brownies present. He made good use of the long stage, and built in 'front of stage' section,- this added to the dimension of things. A lot of hard work had also been put in by a number of others, to make it the success it was.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR - DEBRA WARNER: again had worked very hard in teaching the, children the music, they were full of it, and couldn't wait to impress us with what they had done. The Orchestra; JIM HORTON (Drums), KATE HORTON -(Percussion), RICHARD LOCK (Guitar), PHILIP NOYCE (Bass Guitar), and DEBRA on Piano, all blended well, and the pace was good. To your CREDIT, you did not try to drown your singers. Well done.

The large cast worked well on a stage which was more suited to your needs on this occasion. It gave the animals and wraithes more scope, and CHOREOGRAPHERS - DEBBIE LOCK and CAROLYN TAYLOR had worked out some nice moves to integrate into the plot.

SET DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION. Simple but effective. I liked the Dungeon in Actg. Good sound effects as the door opened and closed. Well done to GEOFF PRICHARD, CAROLE and JIM TAPPENDEN, JO and PETER WEBSTER, and to STAGE MANAGER - GEOFF PRICHARD for keeping everyone in order during the show...

I'm sure, JOAN PRICHARD - Assistant Musical Director, and TIM REEVES -Production Manager, had also played their part in the smooth running of the show, as had RICHARD CLARKE, LIGHTING DESIGN; with assistance from GARY BATES, DEBRA KEASAL TIM REEVES and ALAN TAYLOR.

COSTUME TEAM. KIM ALLEN, LYNDA BATES, SHARON GERRY, JOAN LEE, DEBORAH REEVES, JENI SUMMERFIELD and CAROLE TAPPENDEN, What a splendid job you all did. There were hours of work involved, the visual effect was fantastic. The colour scheme used, had a lot of thought put into the work. I thought they looked spectacular. Well done to you all.

MAKE UP SUPERVISORS. An enormous task, for such a large group of performers. Very effective, and many were striking under the lights. One or two people had not put make-up on the back of their hands, necks, etc. This is easily picked up under stage lights. CAST - PLEASE - if the make-up people ask you to do something - please do it - as they are most probably speaking from experience.

STAGE STAFF and PROPS. Were well looked after by LUKE GERRY and TIM GERRY.. Now to some of the main characters.

MRS TICKLEME - GARY BATES. Well done; kept the show moving, excellent facial expressions. Good diction and was relaxed in the character. I liked the head-dress.

FEAR - BECKY ALLEN; PESTILENCE - SAMMY ALLEN; SIR PLUSSE - SARAH VARNON; SIR REALE - LOIS WELLS; SIR JIKAL-TRUSSE - KEN BROWN.: SIR VEILLANCE -CAROLE TAPPENDEN; SIR CUITOUS - JENI SUMMERFIELD; PAGE - JESSICA GORTON.

All the above complimented each other in so many ways. There were nice cameo scenes, and in all cases, the diction was good, and they seemed to have enjoyed acting their characters. I would have liked to have seen 'proper' moustaches for some of the 'Sirs', instead of thin 'after thought' kind of pencil moustaches. They didn't seem in character.

MERLIN - DOMINIC BULLOCK. Good characterization. Excellent diction, and very expressive eyes. Why, did you not have a long beard? It would have added so much to your character.

ARTHUR - ASHLEY BATES. I liked your interpretation - you were at ease in the part, confident and spoke clearly. Good eye contact with Merlin and Morgan Well done.

MORGAN LE KAR - JO WEBSTER. Good interpretation, you certainly gave the impression of enjoying being the 'baddy'. Good make-up, excellent costume, and good use of your hands; I thought that your fingernails could have been much longer.

ROBIN LE KAR - SIMON WISBEY; played the part well, as mummy's boy - an experienced actor, who took it in his stride. I liked the singing with Morgan.

MARGARET - NAOMI BULLOCK, in control of your character throughout; certainly knew how to handle Sir Loin. You sang well, and I liked your contribution with some of the Knights in the dungeon. Well done.

WRAITHES - JOAN LEE, DEBBIE LOCK, CAROLYN TAYLOR and KAREN WHIFFEN. Well done to you all; how you have all changed... Fancy being in Phantom next? I'm sure you all felt exhausted by Saturday night.

BEAR - REBECCA LOCK; BUBO - KATHRYN WHIFFEN; THE-BOOK OF SPELLS - ROSIE OLIVER THE AUTOMATON - OLIVER WELLS; and THE CLOCK - ELEANOR MORTON. All of you played your parts well in, making this an 'all round' production; enjoyed by you all. Well done.

The audience enjoyed the local references within the script, and the songs sung with clarity and purpose; we enjoyed 'Camelot', 'The Stately Homes of England', 'Don't Go Out Tonight', 'Catch a falling Star', 'Stand by your Man', 'I have a dream', I thought that 'Some say love is a river' was very effectively sung. 'Head tucked underneath his arm', and of course the 'audience song' 'Zip-a-de-do-dah. All this added up to a good night's family entertainment. You enjoyed doing it, we enjoyed watching it and that is what it is all about; and long may it continue.

Many thanks - and good luck for your future productions.

GARETH JEREMY.

REGION 12.

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