

Faringdon Dramatic Society

Arthur's Adventure or Merlin to the Rescue

by Peter Webster

Curtains open to a Medieval set and a full stage of Courtiers wearing colourful, shiny tabards singing 'Hard Times'. Mrs Tickleme (Bex Massie) in bright pink feather trimmed gown asks the audience to shout, 'Tickle me' every time she appears - nice and easy to remember and they do! Mrs T is housekeeper to Sir Jikal-Trusse (again say it fast) (Gary Field) and a larger than life Dame. A great fanfare announces the arrival of the Knights of the Round Table singing their rousing song in silver sequinned hoods and tunics.

Merlin (Sarah Couzens) in sparkling purple tells the Courtiers that the man who releases the Sword from the stone in the forest will be their next King.

On a front-cloth, Morgan Le Fay (evil, glamorous Suzanna Carter) tells her son Robin (Dom Allum) that the Sword and the Throne will be his with the help of her four Black Knights. Who wore black sequinned tabards, white faces and smoky black eyes.

In Merlin's cave, Bubo, the Owl, watches Merlin make a custard pie. Eventually, the pie ends up in Merlin's face but was placed so carefully (on this evening) that the surprise fell flat - timing is everything.

A rather long intro to 'I'll Be Watching You' and lack of movement rather held up the pace and the band still seems loud with the drummer drowning out the words. Then stirring marching music for the Dark Knights and lovely strobe lighting for the Evil enchantress.

Mrs Tickleme brilliantly sings 'It Don't Impress Me Much' and in Merlin's Wood the Black Knights chase him around the Hall, catch him and put him in jail where he sings 'I Have a Dream'.

The curtains open to a really good freeze from the whole cast and the Community Song was 'Thank you very much' but we needed the words to sing from.

In the Forest 'You're a Real Nowhere Man' is sung by the Evil Enchantress and the Dark Knights to her son - I found this sad and a trifle bullying! Then the Knights of the Round Table seize the Ring from the Evil Enchantress and the Dark Knights collapse - they are then banished by Merlin and Arthur is pronounced King.

The finale was a lovely full stage singing 'Thank you very much' - King Arthur appearing in regal red and silver, sending the capacity audience happily home.

Deidre Jones ODN

April 2017