

Jack and the Beanstalk by Peter Webster
Presented by Faringdon Dramatic Society - Jan 2013

This pantomime opened with a great 'sock it to 'em' 'Mr Blue Sky' - a full stage, good attack, good choreography, bright colourful costumes and we sat back ready to enjoy ourselves. We were not disappointed.

Beautifully painted backdrop (designer Jo Webster) in Dolly Dainty's Dairies, Joan Lee as Dolly batting beautiful eyelashes and smothering her son with kisses. Son, Jack, a confident Suzanna Carter, vows to help their finances by selling Magnesia their cow - milk of Magnesia! - More large eyelashes on a very pretty cow, (Debbie Lock and Katie Dyer)

Farmer Fussbudget (a little subdued Gary Field) demands the rent and his pretty daughter, Florence (Andrea Smith) vows to help Jack. Jack sells Magnesia to a Wizard (Richard Palacio in swirling purple robes and long white hair) for a bag of beans. There is a hen that lays golden eggs (a splendidly clucky Jo Webster) for the Ogre. The Ogre (a rather laid-back Duncan Sinclair) tall, thin in black, good make-up, looking more like the child catcher in 'Chitty' but not nearly so scary. Jack's beans grow into a huge beanstalk and when Florence climbs the beanstalk, she is captured by the Ogre. Drudge (Helen Thrower) and Dogsboddy (Verity Roberts) are superb as the Ogre's unwilling henchmen with a very funny marching scene and a lovely song 'Put a Little Love in Your Heart' with enthusiastic audience participation.

Florence sings 'I Need a Hero' with good use of stage, strong movements and lively chorus backing. Jack and Florence are re-united and sing together a confident 'Rule the World' with nice harmony.

There were six sparkly dressed dancing fairies, seven Ogre's servants, four yellow faced chicks and eleven chorus members all appropriately dressed with good reactions and confident singing throughout.

There were six musicians including the pianist Debra Warner as Musical Director adding the excitement of live music and helpful backing to the artists.

The bright, colourful costumes designed as usual by Jeni Summerfield, Joan Lee and team were of the high standard always displayed at Faringdon. The careful make-up should be mentioned and the lighting (designed by Ian Chandler).

The witty script by Peter Webster kept us all laughing and Peter directed his pantomime with a sure hand.

I felt a great attention to detail had gone into this production by the talented team at Faringdon and it showed in this great pantomime.

Deidre Jones