

‘The Snow Queen’ by Peter Webster presented by Faringdon Dramatic Society Jan 2015

The huge pale blue velvet curtains opened to a crisp, wintry set, deep blue sky on the cyclorama and tall, solid fir trees, dripping with snow, in front of white ‘legs’ either side of the stage. Cleverly designed by Jo Webster, this set fitted beautifully for the wintry market square and with different lighting (Ian Chandler and Paul and Tim Mountford-Lister) for the Snow Queen’s Kingdom. Eleven people named as set builders and painters.

The ‘Russian peasant’ chorus - 35, all in different outfits, as you would expect Townspeople to be, filled the stage as market trader, Carlo (confident Seb Allum) and his Ma (Helen Throver) meet his sweetheart, Gloria (Andrea Smith). Lovely chorus song ‘You’ve Got a Friend in Me’.

The backcloth turns ice blue as the imperious Snow Queen (Amanda Linstead) with perfect posture and diction, commands her two henchmen, Jackie and Jill Frost (Katie Dyet and Verity Roberts) and her five wicked Ice Elves to sprinkle fairy dust into Carlo’s eyes. This will put him under her spell. They all sing ‘Dark Moon Rising’.

On a front cloth, Gloria beautifully sings ‘It was only a Winters Tale’, with 16 chorus joining in.

We meet fairy tale characters that have all been turned ‘nasty’ by the Snow Queen’s fairy dust. The Sun Queen, (Yvonne Kelly) in long yellow dress and sparkly tiara, ‘wakens’ the 3 Roses who help to find Carlo in the Snow Queen’s Kingdom. The Raven (Dominic Allum), with good diction, leads the way in superb Raven costume (wonderful wardrobe by Jeni Summerfield, Joan Lee and Lynda Bates).

In the Snow Queen’s Kingdom there is a beautiful turquoise lighting effect on the rippling backcloth with freestanding bare-branched trees in front as Gloria powerfully sings ‘Let it Go.’ Gloria kisses Carlo and breaks the Snow Queen’s spell and they sing ‘Nothing’s Gonna Stop Us Now’.

The finale song ‘Winter Wonderland’ with swift changing colours, white fairy lights on the trees, was sung with attack and joy by the whole cast.

The lighting, set and wardrobe were superb, with lovely voices and confident, well-drilled chorus to do it justice.

Congratulations to Director and author, Peter Webster and his great back-up team, on a thoroughly enjoyable production.

Deidre Jones - ODN