

National Operatic & Dramatic Association

London Area Report



Society
Production
Date
Venue
Report by

FARINGDON DRAMATIC SOCIETY

28-29 September 2007
Faringdon Junior School
Gareth Jeremy. Region 12

My thanks to Karen once more to review your latest production – Peter Panto, written by your own member, Peter Webster. Your Society is very fortunate to call upon so many talented individuals. It was also very gratifying to read in your programme that you were donating the royalties from the panto, and the evening raffle take to Great Ormond Street Children's Charity – I hope that the 58, or so children in the cast were aware of the tremendous work done at the hospital.

Once one entered the hall we were immediately made aware of the evening, with Peter, flying across the front curtain, and one immediately thought "will he be flying in the actual production?" – then my thoughts turned to "health and safety" regulations!!!

The Set – designed by Jo Webster, and built by members of the Society, was well constructed, and painted as required, to illustrate_ The Darling's Nursery, in the opening scene, and then Neverland, and in Act 2 the main theme was the deck of the Pirate Ship, before reverting back in the final scene to the Darling's Nursery once more. The scene changes were carried out quietly and efficiently. The extra apron was a must, with such a large cast.

With such a large cast, I think I counted 73 individuals – everyone entered into the spirit of the production – and without exception everyone gave of their very best, and above all – everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves – and that's what it's all about. Enjoying yourselves – and giving enjoyment to others.

The main players: Mr Darling/Pirate – John Taylor – an experienced actor, who did everything that was asked of him. I think he really enjoyed the little bit extra, as the Pirate!!

Mrs Darling – Katie Dyet – was the supportive mother, there were times when we lost her speaking voice – as she turned up stage, instead of speaking out to her audience, perhaps a little more aggression was needed in the delivery of the spoken word.

Wendy – their daughter – Miriam Wells – a fine performance, looked good on stage, delivered her lines most clearly, liked her solo, and duet singing with Peter. Was in complete control of her character.

John – their elder son – Jack Porter Michael – their younger son – Sebastian Allum – I do not wish to separate these two, as they both reacted to situations, which applied to each one of them in turn – they spoke clearly and had good facial expressions. Well done.

Nana – the Darling's dog – Will Clarke – I think he really enjoyed the role – must have been difficult to learn the lines in the script! Well done.

Peter Pan – Verity Roberts – was in control of her character throughout. Good facial expressions, good clear diction, pleasant singing voice, and was the perfect partner for Wendy. A fine performance.

Tinkerbell – a fairy – Alex Oliver – this part was made for her – she revelled in it – each time she appeared on stage, she added a new dimension to the plot – excellent facial expressions,

good clear diction, her timing was first class, good singing voice, and above all, she was really enjoying playing the character. Congratulations.

Captain Hook – a Pirate – Allan Dover – came over very well as “the baddy”, good clear diction, excellent facial expressions – and was always in command. I liked the costume, and the wig, however I felt the facial make-up could have been improved upon. With such a dark wig, the eye-brows needed to be darker, as they were lost against such a dark wig, which was magnificent. I’m not sure if people sitting near the back of the hall could pick up his expressive face, as we could, sitting near the front. Nevertheless, a fine performance.

Smee – his first mate – Rob Thorpe – was true to his Captain, and gave of his all – was in control of all situations, and has the knack of getting the audience on his side. Sang tunefully – and I’m sure enjoyed playing the character. Well done.

Trainee Fairies – Jemima Stevens, Meg Thorpe, Daisy Vanags – well done, the three of you, you reacted well to things said and done by Tinkerbell – you will not need your L-Plates on any more. Well done.

The Pirate Crew – The Lost Boys – Pirate Chorus – Animals – Toys/Crocodiles – and the Crocodile – Debbie Lock – all played their part in making the whole pantomime work – Congratulations.

Co directors Peter Webster and Karen Whiffen are to be congratulated on another fine effort. It is not easy working with such a large cast, and the discipline required for such a task is tremendous, and I’m sure there are others who had helped to ensure that all the children knew exactly what to do, and when., Good use was made of the entire stage, and the aisles, and all the children knew the words to the songs. When a Society can call upon such experienced members to direct, that is half the battle – they know what they want from a production, and they receive the respect they deserve from others. Congratulations.

The Orchestra – under Musical Director – Steve Page – did a fine job, produced a nice tone, and were well balanced. I liked the choice of music for the entire show, and the way some of the orchestra were dressed as Pirates. The Parrot was well behaved throughout the entire show!

Costume design & Creation – Joan Lee, Sharon Gerry, Jeni Summerfield – I have said it before many times, how fortunate your Society is in having such talented individuals to design and make such beautiful, and colourful costumes – were they responsible for tearing some of the “Lost Boys” costumes?

Props – Fiona Merrick – were you responsible for making the Crocodile costume, and the Foxes heads? If so, they were excellent. A lot of co-ordinating had to be done.

Make-Up – Nona Lewis, Lynne Roberts – there was a lot to do with so many children, it all looked fine, with the dirty knees, etc. I have mentioned Captain Hook’s facial make-up earlier. Well done.

Lighting – Ian Chandler, Gary Bates – everything was fine, and I mentioned earlier about Peter Pan flying.

Sound – Gary Bates – no problems detected on the final night, all microphones seemed to be working well.

Choreography – Tara Whenray – much thought had been given to the style of dancing that would be included in this production. I liked the opening “Rocking Rolling” dance – a few more smiling faces would have been good – and I liked the Crocodile Dance, with some tap. A lot of effort had been made, and it paid off.

Backstage Co-ordinator – Ian Lee; Chaperone Co-ordinator – Katie Dyet – a difficult job, very well done. It was good training for Katie, before she came on stage!!

Programme – Dave Headey – well laid out, and contained all the relevant information. Why not enter it for the basic programme competition with London NODA – details will be sent to your secretary in April – you'll need to submit five copies.

Front of House Co-ordinator – Denise Monk – and supported by many members, as Front of House Team, also running the Bar, and selling raffle tickets – where would any Society be without this dedicated team of helpers?

Thank you once again for an enjoyable evening's entertainment – and I wish you every success with "Outside Edge" – when you go to Canada in May 2008. I'm sure you'll all have a wonderful time – and the right choice of play to take.

Gareth Jeremy, Region 12, London Area