

Faringdon Dramatic Society.
Aladdin.
6th February 2010.
Faringdon Junior School.
Gareth Jeremy Region 12. (London).

This was the last pantomime for me to visit for the 2010 season, and my thanks to **Karen Whiffen**, for the invitation.

This was a very traditional pantomime by **Ron Hall**, and personally I enjoy this type of entertainment.—it has all the ingredients for good clean, family enjoyment, -- and we certainly got that from this performance.

Director, Debbie Lock, had put a lot of thought into this production, before, and I'm sure after rehearsals started. I was also very impressed with her choice of **music for the entire show.**-- ,and I'm sure all the musicians in the pit enjoyed the whole production, as they were so involved, and they produced a nice balanced tone, which did not drown those on stage, which can so easily happen. Well done to you all.

This was a large cast to work with, having some thirteen main characters, and a chorus of some 28 male and female, --- and it was interesting to see a large number of young people involved.. This is the breeding ground for our future Societies, -- and the discipline shown by them all was first class,--- they knew where they should be, were confident, and reacted to what was going on around them.--- they all acted, and reacted. Well done.

The main principals, ----

As mentioned earlier there were thirteen, and they all supported each other very well, --- there were no weak links.

Wishee Washee, ---- Allan Dover.

He opened the show, and his experience showed as the ' warm up ' man, after the **Director,---had done her introduction, prior to the curtain going up.** He worked well with everyone, especially his duck ! (which was so well made by the Costume department.), --- did you auction it off after the final performance ?? He made full use of the stage, and his rapport with the audience was good.

Widow Twankey, ---- Gary Thompson.

Seemed very much at ease with his character, looked good, in excellent costumes, and fine make up. Good diction, and made full use of the stage, his pace, and interaction with others around him was good.

Aladdin, ---- Andrea Smith.

Looked good on stage, sang sweetly, and was very much in control of her character,---- some nice moments with her reactions to Abanazar, especially when she was entering the cave, and her facial expressions once she was inside.

Princess Lotus Blossom, ---- Verity Roberts.

Pleasure to see her return to the boards again, after her first child. Radiant smile each time she appeared, and her singing was a joy to listen to. Very relaxed in all that she did, and it was all done with poise, and a purpose.

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Abanazar. ---- Daniel Lander.

Once he made his appearance, --- we all knew we had a bad baddy. ---- both from his facial expression, ---- and that fantastic costume, (with those shoulders) – congratulations again to the wardrobe department. I have said it before, and I'll say it again..---- **you are so fortunate in having such talented ladies to run this area for you. Long may it continue.**

He was very much at home in his character, and seemed to enjoy every moment he was on stage. A first class performance, which certainly had the audience transfixed.!

Emperor, ----- John Taylor.

Another very experienced performer, who was very much in character, excellent strong speaking voice, and every time he appeared it was obvious to all who he was, -- and the respect he expected from all those around him.

One Long Pong. ---- Seb Allum.

Seb is quite a professional on the pantomime scene. Again I was impressed with his performance. His timing was good, and his diction was clear and precise.— and meaningful.

His movement around the stage was very good, and he has plenty of rhythm in his body. I wish him well with his future ambitions.

Minor Principals

I felt that these people contributed a great deal to the overall production, they were an excellent ' back up ' team.

Minnie – Meg Porter, and Winnie, — Verity Green, worked as a team, and Winnie kept her character throughout, even when the photograph was being taken, --- **there was no hint of a smile., — Well done.**

Katie Dyet, -- Slave of the Ring, --- also impressed, with excellent body, and hand movements., -- and **Genie of the Lamp, --- Luke Gerry,--** looked impressive, in his beautiful costume.

Vendor, ---- Rhys Lewis, / Matthew Warner, --- did all that was asked of them.

The Chorus.

Each time they appeared on stage they were full of enthusiasm, and reacted to every situation. They sang well, and seemed lifted by the audience clapping during the rendition of ' The Lord Above', ---- ' Flash bang wallop' was also well received. When the audience are with you, -- it makes such a difference, -- and they were ' behind you' !!--- because you all smiled, and gave of your best.!

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Behind the Scenes.

I have said it many times, where would any production be **without this dedicated group of people. All are such a vital link in any show.**

Set Design, --- Jo Webster and Allan Dover, --- this was simple but conveyed all that was necessary, especially as you had such a large cast to work around. Who designed the – **washing machine, --- it certainly made the audience smile. --- and the sound effects during it working were very effective.---** one thing that puzzled me, --- I never saw any washing powder being used in it, --- so the water in the Faringdon area must have a devastating effect on peoples washing.?? It's a shame that Hoovers, --- had not come across your invention.!

Stage Manager, Tom Woolman, and his crew of Allan Merrick, Tim Gerry, Ian Lee, --- all worked very efficiently.

Costumes, --- Jeni Summerfield, Joan Lee, Sharon Gerry.--- as always they turn out immaculate costumes, --- Abanazar's was amazing --- and brought many a chuckle in the audience. Congratulations to you all once more.

Props, --- Keith Merrick, Fiona Merrick, Carole Tappenden, --- no easy task to collect so many items, but they all fitted well into the production,--- was the washing machine on your list, --- or set ??.

Lighting, --- Paul , and Tim Mountford – Lister, Ian Chandler. --- very effective throughout, and especially for the ' inside of the cave'. Well done.

Sound, --- Gary Bates, --- all worked very efficiently, especially in the sound effects required.(thanks Alan Merrick.) I know you had some hanging microphones, but it may have helped some of the principals in their songs, if they'd had individual microphones, however this can be expensive, and may not come within your budget. Perhaps the Society can invest in some in the future.?

Programmes, --- David Headey, ---

I liked the cover, and the contents was clear, and could be read in subdued lighting,--- and gave everyone a clear notion of what the evening was about, and details about the Society, -- and hopefully interest some new members.

Prompt, --- Lois Wells. ----- a vital cog in any production, but to the best of my knowledge was redundant on the final performance, ---- oh, yes she was. !1

Posters, ---- Adrian Wells, ---- I did not personally see one, but again they are important publicity for any organization.

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Front of House Co – ordinator, -- Sandra Keen,---- had rounded up her helpers, - Garry Field, (Bar manager), and Jeff Barry, Janie Eyre – Brook, Dave Headley, Denise Monk, Jeni Summerfield, Ann Taylor, Peter Webster, --- to make sure everything front of house ran smoothly, and helped to make extra revenue through the raffle ticket sales, and bar takings. All very much required these days to help a show to break even.!

**Director, ---- Debbie Lock
Musical Director, ---- Marianna Thompson.
Producer, ---Fiona Merrick.**

The three ladies had worked hard for many months in the planning, rehearsing, of this show to give those on stage, and the audience, a night to remember for some time to come, ----- and the final number, -- ‘Your never fully dressed without a smile’, is worth remembering on a cold miserable February night.!

Thank you for an enjoyable performance.

Gareth Jeremy.

Region 12 (London.).