

Oxfordshire Drama Network

ODN Review

PETER PANTO

FARINGDON DRAMA SOCIETY

ODN PANTOMIME COMPETITION REVIEW 2008

First impressions are always important and the Front of House team was efficient and friendly to all who crossed the threshold. It was a nice touch to see the moving Peter Pan image across the front of the curtains. Faringdon's Front of House are well rehearsed in their jobs and the efficient team were no exception on this occasion.

The scenery all the way through was creative and appropriate. I was not quite sure if I liked the modern décor with Victorian style costume at the beginning, but it was effective.

The costumes were good. The toys at the beginning were lovely and apart from a pair of cowboy boots which I found out of place, everything was well thought out and it was obvious that a lot of time had been spent finding everything. The make up was nice and well done because nothing stood out as being over the top, so big pat on the back for the make up girls (Nona and Lynne) No easy task with such a big cast.

The sound and special effects were appropriate and added to the atmosphere and mood of the Panto. The live music was a delight and their applause was well deserved. Nice to have an overture to settle the audience, very well done all.

Such a big cast would be really daunting to most groups but Faringdon seem to revel in it. The Directors had good groupings on stage all the time and used all the acting areas well. They also kept things moving from one scene to another, no gaps. Great discipline! Congratulations.

The group singing was well done, loud and tuneful. All the singing numbers were quite short which helped move the show along as well. Crocodile Rock was my favourite and even the Croc knew the moves. Great! Time Warp went down a treat with the audience.

The acting was generally very good and characterizations thought of well. Mr. Darling (John Taylor) started off a little shaky but soon gained confidence. The toys were brilliant but the soldier did fidget a bit. There was very good interaction between the 3 children and they really seemed to be enjoying everything they were doing. Michael's facial expressions were a delight. Some people were a little slow on cues but I am sure it was first night nerves and they were quicker on the following nights. Little thing to watch is starting to talk before clapping or songs have finished and also "finding the light" when a spot is being used. All the actors worked hard and it paid off with a very enjoyable show. Tinkerbelle (Alex Oliver) was full of charisma and played her part well. Peter Pan (Verity Roberts) also made his/her role very believable and magical. Captain Hook (Allan Dover) looked stunning and was a brilliant foil for the good characters. Smee (Rob Thorpe) was great and although not a strong voice made up for it with a wonderful stage presence and likeable personality.

It was good to see the individuality of the pirate characters rather than all the same stereo types. (although I do not think Jack Sparrow would have played such a small part if it was for real!!) Make sure everyone joins in the group work. In "No place like Home" some people were not crying and someone was chewing gum.

The audience participation was brilliant...they were with you all the way. I must admit to finding the end of Act 1 and Act 2 songs too much and rather slow. Perhaps 5 minutes could have been knocked off the time if these had been polished up or streamlined.

What a great night! Thank you so much, Faringdon, for all your hard work and for giving a Panto lover the knowledge that good Panto is still alive and kicking.

Susi Dalton