

Faringdon Folly

Pirates captured at last

Pirates of the Faribbean - Faringdon Dramatic Society

ONCE AGAIN the Faringdon Dramatic Society has come up with an excellent original pantomime from the pen of Nick Coard (remember his "How Clare Earned His Wings?"). Not only did he write it, but also directed it, assisted by his experienced co-director, Claire Forty. The set, designed by Jo Webster, was most ingenious. An additional, narrow stage had been added, running full length down the middle of the hall, meeting up with the permanent stage at one end, allowing for cast entrances at both ends, with an audience seated on three sides. And did it work? In the main, yes. It gave much scope for vigorous movement and dancing by the very large numbers of 'Townfolk' and 'Pirates'. And Gary Bates, as the Dame, performed a long dazzling dance, routine, using, every inch of the platform, receiving a great ovation for his skill. However, there was a slight problem with audibility, a common problem with this type of 'in the round' performance as the inevitable backs presented to certain areas of the audience, when careful extra projection is necessary.

With such a large cast, it is somewhat invidious to mention names, but Gary Bates as the Dame was quite irresistible and the source of much amusement. The young couple, Billy and Buttercup, (Elli Morton and Grace Anderson) gave delightful performances, and have great potential.

But how about the unseen, unsung army of backstage assistants? - the clever choreography of Laura Anderson and Paula Read, the colourful costumes of Claim Forty, Joan Lees, Jeni Summerfield, the set construction team, the sound and lighting group:- too numerous to name individually. And what an enormous asset - live music from the band, who performed with great enthusiasm and volume (perhaps a little less of the latter might be desirable when accompanying singers). They certainly added greatly to the fun and excitement of the show.

This was rip-roaring entertainment from this very talented group, who appear to be ready to meet any challenge, not only with their pantomimes, but also in their choice of plays at other regular times.

Jeannette Grace