

**Did we have a lovely time?
Oh yes we did!**



Nothing cheers up a wet dreary January quite like a panto. The childhood memories of visiting the theatre, with (often dodgy) dancing and singing from some minor celebrities and maybe a programme to remember it all by are distant but very sweet.

The Faringdon Dramatic Society production of *The Ruby Slippers*, a re-imagining of the classic *Wizard of Oz* written and directed by Bex Hutchings, brought back many happy memories, and we were really impressed with the show. Along with panto staples including the Dame (who was great fun), a Goodie to cheer and a Baddie to boo at, the show also had lots of extra characters, including a large cast of children who were fantastic. Whether dressed as Emerald city residents or flying monkeys, they were impressively organised and knew all of their lines and dance moves perfectly. Annabel Whalley, who played the main character Dorothy, did a fantastic job and was incredibly professional, looking very at home indeed on The Elms Primary School stage.

With acting débuts from the actors playing Lion, Aunt Em and the Tinman, the show was entertaining throughout. The quality of the acting from the whole cast was really good but it was the singing which was particularly impressive, particularly the characters of Blunda, The Wizard of Oz and the Wicked Witch, who filled the room with song. The live band accompanying the performance was a real treat. They were excellent throughout, and added tremendously to the atmosphere.

As well as having a great set, the costumes and make up for the show were fabulous, and clearly lots of careful thought had gone into planning these out. With top notch lighting and sound production too, the quality of the show far exceeded our expectations. You can certainly see why the Society has received several awards over the years, including pantomime competitions run by Oxfordshire Drama Network.

The Society's next production will be *Enchanted April* by Matthew Barber, at Buscot House Theatre from 15th - 18th May, with tickets available from the online box office. Read through for the performance will be on Thursday 22nd February at Faringdon United Church, with casting taking place on Monday 26th February. If you would like to be involved in the show on stage, behind the scenes or front of house contact the Society via their website at <https://www.faringdondramatic.org.uk/>.

Alex Molton

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