



Society : **Faringdon Dramatic Society.**
 Production : **The Scarlet Pumpernickel – Pantomime by Dave Buchanan.**
 Date : **1st February 2014.**
 Venue : **Faringdon Primary School.**
 Report by : **Gareth Jeremy.**

Report

What an entertaining evening we all had in the audience, on a cold, miserable, wet, February evening, but having seen this colourful, joyous, fun evening, which was not like the usual pantomime, -- with a Dame, that one expects to see, but this time the Dame was different, -- as Mimi, (a café owner) -- the gloom of the recent weather disappeared, --- three cheers to the entire cast, on stage, and those associated with the production.

The Scarlet Pumpernickel, was unknown to me, -- and therefore please excuse me, as I give the synopsis of the show to my associates in London, who will read this report.

The show is set against the background of the French Revolution. We join Peter Breakneck, and his chums in their adventure as they seek to thwart baddy Citizen Chauvelin's evil plans.

The villagers of Saucissons – sue – Mer are shocked when Citizen Chauvelin threatens to ban their beloved pastime of *boules*. Unless they turn over the Scarlet Pumpernickel. When Chauvelin arrests heroine Simone de Boudoir, hero Percy Breakneck plus the Three Flops, dame Mimi Blancmange, and Mayor Gordon Legroom, devise a cunning rescue plan. The Chateau where Simone is held is (allegedly) haunted, and the scene is set for a denouement full of thrills and comic horror.

The Society always build their own set, and once again it was up to the usual high standard, - well constructed, and painted to a high standard. It consisted of the outside of 'the Café Chez Mimi, -- and some trees situated in the Market Square., for Act 1, and in Act 2, we had the addition of scenes from the Great Hall of the Chateau, with one particularly well lit scene to illustrate the 'Statues of Truth and Honesty, with eyeballs being lit up individually on occasions, and the armoured statue remaining motionless the other side of the stage.—a lot of thought had been given by the Director to these scenes, as you could see the audience were 'riveted to what was going on, -- and what is going to happen next ?

The orchestra once more were a joy to listen to, and were kept in control by Debra Warner, on piano and reeds. I could not quite understand why the drummer was dressed as a female ? -- I thought perhaps at some stage he was going to appear on stage, --- although some reference was made of him, by some of the cast, -- but I do not know if that was part of the script ? -- I must say his make up was well done, he played the drums well, and seemed a nice boy !

I do not know if Debra was responsible for the Chorus singing, but it came over very melodious, and above all you could see that all the cast were enjoying singing, -- and when the curtain first opened, -- we saw that mass of wonderful colour from the costumes, for such a large chorus, everyone knew we were in for a treat. I have said on many occasions, your Society are so fortunate to have such a talented Wardrobe department.—if you do not hire out some of your wardrobe, -- you should give it some serious thought, for extra revenue.—it is better than many professional costumes that I come across in my travels around the different Societies.

The main Principals, ---

Laura Coleman, --- Percy



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Yvonne Kelly, -- Simone

I do not wish to separate these two, as being 'lovers', - they did so much together, they looked good on stage, and the interaction between them convincing.— their costumes were excellent, and well fitting, and they sang sweetly, but at times in their songs, the diction was not clear, but in the spoken dialogue it was fine. – the necessary accents were sustained throughout the show. Well done.

Adrian Wells, -- Chauvelin.

Is he now being 'cast as the baddie' ? – gave a first class performance, from the minute he came on the stage, -- his eye contact with the audience, and the use of his voice for getting the audience against him was instant, -- and continued for the whole evening, -- even at the curtain call. Congratulations.

Duncan Sinclair, --- Gaston.

The contrast between he and Chauvelin came over well, and his scenes with Mimi were a joy to watch, -- his diction was good, and he sang his songs clearly with conviction, -- obviously he had used his skills to write new words to some of the songs in the show. A first rate performance.

Verity Roberts, --- Mimi

Every time she appeared on stage, -- she lit it up, -- and as it said in the programme ' – she hoped it would bring a touch of elegance and sophistication to the part', --- and that it certainly did, --- I have not seen such a Dame, in any other 21 years, as the NODA representative.

Superb costumes, and hat, and the vivaciousness in all that she did. Excellent facial expressions, good clear diction, and a fine singing voice. Congratulations on a superb performance.

Seb Allum, -- Alphie

He is a 'natural' talent, -- his timing on stage is of a high quality, and he knows exactly how to handle his audience, especially in a pantomime. His French accent was maintained throughout, and you could see his fondness for Colette, -- and the way he wished no harm would come to Fifi (Mimi's poodle) played by Imogen Hunt, who did well, -- I would have liked to see her occasionally lift her hands, as if they were her front paws., either wise, fine performance.

Ellie Hickman, --- Colette.

A waitress at Mimi's café, did all that she was asked to do, with a smile, especially when she presented Chevrolet, with the 'sponge', in his face. She was an ideal partner for Alphie, and they worked well together, -- and had the knack of getting the audience to join them in 'Alouette', -- their personality shone through.

Well done , both of you.

The Three fops, --- Charlie --- Jayne Hoyland



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Charlie, --- Debbie Lock
 Freddy, -----Fiona Merrick

They all lived up to their reputation of being 'a little thick' ! again excellent costumes, good make up, and they played their part in the plot very well, with Freddy being even 'slower' than the other two, -- clear diction, and I'm sure they enjoyed their characterisations.

Duc de Montmartre, --- Dave Headey

Another experienced member of the Society, who did all that was asked of him, as he was in the secure hands of G4S, and had little chance of escaping. He must have been very warm in his suit of armour, as he stood motionless in the Great Hall, -- less to learn on this occasion.!

There were many more who had minor roles, and they all performed well adding to the interest of the evening,-- they included;---

Chauvelin's henchmen, --- Chevrolet, -- Matthew warner, Michelin, -- Charlotte Allum

Two Guards, -- Perier, -- Joseph Armer, and Charles, -- Leo Thrower.

Claudette, -- Chloe Wright.

Henri, -- Dominic Allum

Two servants, --- Henry Marlow. and Alexandre, -- Charlie Broughton.

Page, -- Jake Nicholls.

Madame Defarge, -- Carole Tappenden, --- I hope you can stand up straight again, -- a wonderful cameo role, -- well done.

Again the Villagers, Waitresses, Stallholders, Street entertainers, Statues, Ghosts and Skeletons, all added to the splendid entertainment.

No Society could survive without the help of all those people **Behind The Scenes**, -- you know who they are, and they work, as a Team, -- to make the show run like clockwork, -- thank you all, -- and once again I was fortunate with a raffle prize.

Helen Thrower, can be congratulated in all that she has achieved in this production, her experience was there for us all to see. It may have been her first pantomime, but as stated in the programme, -- I'm sure it will not be her last.!

The final number of the evening on stage was so appropriate, and sung with gusto; -- 'we're going to have fun, fun, --- and all for one.!

We did have fun, and my long journey back to Banbury, -- in the rain, had been well worth it.!

Gareth Jeremy,

Region 12 Representative, -- London.