

NODA Review

SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS

Haslingfield Little Theatre at Haslingfield Village Hall

Directed by Judith Brammar & Peter Hains

Musical Director Tom Hatfield

Choreographers Natalie Gillies, Molly Freemantle & Jenny Gore

What a pleasure to be back in the audience of a Haslingfield Little Theatre pantomime. An HLT panto is recognised by me to be the start of the panto season. When panto comes to town inevitably we are treated to one of the more well-known stories and this year's offering, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is no exception. The story of a beautiful girl who takes refuge in the forest in the house of seven dwarfs to hide from her stepmother, the wicked Queen. The story however is almost incidental and one that becomes a vehicle for providing entertainment with great fun, humour, song, dance and, often, wonderfully contrived characters in this case by author Ben Crocker .

The sets were superb. Congratulations to the talented Set Painting Team. You have certainly carried on the late Betty Hunt's tradition of creating beautiful settings. A huge amount of work which doesn't go unnoticed nor unappreciated. The costumes by Terry Baker and Jenny Hains were impressive. The Crow's costume for Black Wing alone was absolutely fabulous. Lighting by Phil Dale and Sarah Harrold was good. I wasn't sure whether a follow spot was used but if not it all worked very well. Sound effects too worked a treat but were rather loud which rendered some of them not quite as convincing as perhaps they should have been. Singing was good throughout, the four musicians excellent and the choreography simple and well executed.

The cast this year included a goodly number of YLT members taking on the roles of the Dwarfs and augmenting the adult chorus. They had been well drilled by YLT Director Cheryl Lowery and made a huge contribution to the production with their focus and talented commitment. Be proud YLT!

Zia Ratnasothy made a sweet and lovely Snow White. She worked well with the Dwarfs and with Natalie Gillies who gave a fine performance as Prince Frederick. Helen Brammar as the evil Queen Grimelza was splendid and certainly elicited the requisite boos. Simeon Hill as the obsequious Black Wing made a good and somewhat less evil sidekick. Of course there has to be a bit of good to balance out the evil and this took the form of trainee fairy Goodheart (Amanda Hourmand) with Professor Wonderwings (Jenny Gore) keeping an eye on her. Always a hit with HLT audiences was Andy Walker back in a frock and on good form as Dame Dolly Dumpling well supported by Matt Dye as Danny Dumpling. What would panto be without an incompetent comedy duo? Thankfully this panto wasn't without one. Fiona Musto-King and Jacqui Gruby as Bogwort and Stinkwort were absolutely brilliant and great fun. It is not possible to mention all in this production but suffice to say everyone gave performances of which they can feel proud.

Congratulations to Directors Judith Brammar and Peter Hains, the production team and cast. This production was bright, colourful, energetic and fun. Just what panto is all about.

Julie Petrucci

Regional Representative NODA East District 4 South