

Aladdin

The 2019 Shawford Pantomime

As this is a Parish Magazine I presume readers live in the Parish! I hope you all went to see Aladdin and marvelled at the amount of talent we have in our midst locally. On stage and back stage they all created a polished, slick, witty and thoroughly modern version of Aladdin. Sarah Hawkins – Director – must have been pleased with the Opening Night performance.



The front of House Manager, Simon Forbes, opened the evening with the usual pointing to the Fire Exits and received wild applause!

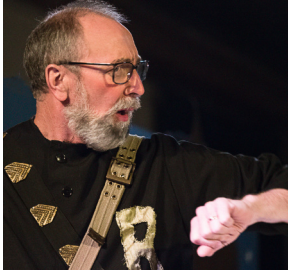
Where to start? Well “There’s nothing like a Dame” especially the one played by Marcus Whitfield as Widow Twankey; in a magnificent costume and huge wig he dominated and



glamourised the action even when his back was all one could see. The apparently bankrupt but expensively and elegantly dressed Sultan (James Marshall) attempted to sell lovely daughter Meghan to the highest bidder. Clemmie Fowle played Princess Meghan with great charm always including the audience on both sides of the stage, and her attendant Jasmine (Alice Wilson) was also a pleasure to watch as was her accompanying small page with very large fan and lovely smile (Tilly Tyson).

First a confession from this rather traditionalist pensioner who regrets the passing of the Stage at one end of the Hall which enables the audience to see all facial expression and hear all dialogue, BUT of course, ‘in the round’ – or more accurately ‘the oblong’ – makes for far more audience participation and inclusion.





Pantomimes must have villains to boo (this year suitably dressed in black) and Vlad the Vizier and henchmen Hump and Rump wonderfully played by Jenny Walmsley, Felicity Pennycook and Bryan Green, brought villainy to a very high level. Ella Tyson played a most attractive and spirited Aladdin.



Widow Twankey's failing laundry had a really excellent staff – DAZ (John Amos) in pink wig and sexy striped socks and BOLD (Liz Robinson).

Pharmacist (DD Wilson), Thread – sorry – Fred Needle, a banker of course (Sheila Forbes) all made distinct individuals of their parts and then there was Wishy Washy played with zest and confidence by Freddie Fowle.



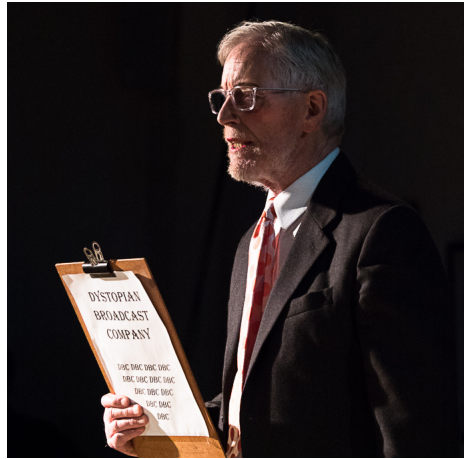
No version of Aladdin can do without a Genie, and this updated version had one no longer residing in a lamp but in a rather out-dated Mobile Phone – press button and Jon Hawkins, in wonderful costume and make up, appears to great sound effects plus witty dialogue and magic carpets.



Whoever held the magic brick like phone got a different response to their three wishes from this excellent Fixer.



Now at various times a Newscaster appeared – played by pantomime author Simon Theobalds complete with clipboard – to



interview The President. We were left in no doubt WHICH President as Anthony Fanshawe was an amazing Trump doppelgänger who could, I'm sure, make a career appearing at stag nights and bar mitzvahs!



Vlad tempts Wishy Washy with the offer of a new phone in exchange for his old brick. Wishy Washy thinks that he's got a good deal But has he really?.



also giving us a solo performance from the stage. They certainly richly deserved the ovation they received.

The costumes were hugely impressive, full of eastern promise and a visual feast.



Who has not yet been mentioned? Only the most important group of people THE BAND : Martin Harris, David Woodward, Fin O'Sullivan, Richard Croker and Gordon Munro whose playing joined the dots holding the whole pantomime together. Martin Harris



The back-stage workers never get the recognition they deserve but without them this smooth polished pantomime would not have happened. The lighting by Kevin Hughes, construction of the Sultan's Palace and stage by Mark Hegan, plus many helpers I'm sure; make up - Bee Welsh, Jude Vallis and Alison Witheyman; prompt - Pam Theobalds, Props (lots of them) - Pam Potts; costumes - Louise Tyson and Jo Fowles; choreography - Emma Barker; designer - David Woodward; assistant director - Jon Amos and stage managers Mel Panario, Liz Whitfield, and Bridget Amos, plus a lovely, smiling bar staff pouring wine!

What a great evening.

Toni Bergstrom