

Pantomime Supplement

Dy2k Whittington & his Dot.c@

"A pantomime for our Times" by Simon Theobalds

Performed in the Shawford Parish Hall Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 December 2000

RGE writes

Three large audiences greatly enjoyed the first Shawford pantomime to be produced in the refurbished Parish Hall. I wonder if the Heathcote Players of the past would have recognised it as such; this was indeed, "A Pantomime for our Times".

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Dy2k (Sheila Forbes) consults the Butcher (Jenny Walmsley), the Baker (Simon North) and the Candlestick maker (Eileen Gorrod) about running for Mayor of London while author Simon Theobalds (in the role of "Typo" Thompson) looks on.

"Baron" & Mrs Hardup (Ian Streat and Jane Hazlitt) and the lovely Exotica (Nick Wells)





The Chorus of little rats singing in the dark

Simon Theobalds' supremely witty and highly topical script, centred around an election for London Mayor, that put the recent American effort to shame, finally consigning the villainous rats to 'a Dome of their own'. The traditional Simple Simon character was transformed by Jon Hawkins into an ingenuous, contemporary, computer nerd. Simon T., who also organised the production, somehow had sufficient energy and skill to spare to play two parts as well.

Sarah Hawkins' expert and lively direction, with skilful use of lighting and scenery, surmounted the problems of a hall with no permanent stage; indeed her 'theatre in the round' approach ensured the immediate involvement of the audience. She also brought the traditional pantomime cross dressing to its logical conclusion with not only a winning and dashing principal boy (Sheila Forbes), but also a predatory and blowsy principal 'girl' (Nick Wells).

Throughout, the production moved at the cracking pace set from the start by the lively trio of tradespeople (Jenny Walmsley, Eileen Gorrod, and Simon North) whose confident and cheerful disharmonies were occasionally mollified by Eileen's melodious moments, much to the feigned disdain of the other two.



Glendarat, Steverat, Kenrat and Frankrat (obscured by Ken) are worried about the Independent mayoral candidate, Dy2k Whittington.

The whole cast exuded vitality, exuberance and an infectious sense of enjoyment; Simon Jones as the macho, wheeler-dealing, 'transmoggified' C@, Jemima Theobalds' pert, lithe wench, and a collection of convincingly malevolent, alarmingly large rats (Muriel Forbes, Simon Theobalds, Mark Hegan, and Brian Green), energetically and stylishly lead by Kenrat (Ken Staunton) and ably supported by a troop of junior rats with an excruciating line in high pitched screams. Tradition was preserved in the shape of Ian Streat's bumbling, stammering Baron Hardup, with Jane Hazlitt as his long-suffering, but unfailingly dignified wife. As Musical Director, Philip Gorrod wrote original songs, arranged all the music, and at the piano and keyboard, ably supported by son Ed on percussion and flute, drove the production along. They all, together with the unsung team of backstage supporters, deserve our warmest congratulations.

Unfortunately, despite the blandishments of Cameron Mackintosh, the production will not be moving to the West End, because these talented neighbours of ours are all busy people in the real world, and one marvels that they found the time to mount a show that gave us all such laughter and enjoyment.



Dr. 'Arri Adni (Jon Hawkins) has stamped on Dy2k's foot for mentioning the Y2K word while they seek the help of the fabulous .c@ (Simon Jones) in ridding London of rats.



At the final curtain, after the rats have been sent off to a "Dome of their own", the musicians – Philip and Ed Gorrod - take a bow.