

DISTRICT 1

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE

KEITH SCOTT-SAVAGE

No reviews available.

DISTRICT 2

NORTH DERBYSHIRE

JOYCE HANDBURY

No reviews available.

DISTRICT 3

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

PHIL WILLIAMS

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Review by: Phil Williams
Presented by: **BLYTH PLAYERS**
Venue: Barnby Memorial Hall Blyth
Performance dates: 3rd to 7th February 2010
Director: Sharon Hughes
Choreographer: Jeanette Adams

This was a good Stephen Duckham pantomime, very well directed, making the most of the opportunities for slapstick and comedy together with audience participation, while keeping the story line flowing. The cast was a mixture of experience and youth and they certainly blended well together in what was overall a fine team performance. Malcolm Pike and Michael Pearce provided a strong comedy lead as Nanny and Barney, while the romantic theme was nicely provided by Hannah Ransford and Richard Fletcher as Princess and Prince, well supported throughout by the other principals. There were also some excellent cameo performances, especially the three lady cleaners with a super routine, and nice effective dancing from the young dancers. Very good home produced backcloths and some excellent home produced costumes enhanced the visual effect and this was also helped with good lighting. Efficient backstage work kept the show moving at all times. The end result was a happy audience who showed their appreciation for real family entertainment.

OUR DAY OUT

Review by: Phil Williams
Presented by: **NOTTINGHAM ARTS THEATRE YOUTH GROUP**
Venue: Nottingham Arts Theatre
Performance dates: 9th to 13th February 2010
Directors: Maggie Andrew, Carol Parkinson
Musical Director: Liz Marsh
Choreographers: Becky Langford, Alice Bentham

This was the musical version and the group took us back to the Seventies together with memories of school trips back through the ages. It was an excellent production and all who were involved should be very proud of their achievements. Maggie certainly knows how to bring out the talent which was shown in abundance on stage and which would be an asset to any senior group. The music came over very well with good interpretation both vocally and from the pit. On stage there were excellent performances individually and as a group with the individual characters clearly established with some confidence. All deserve mention, but especially Lily Taylor-Ward as Carol with a super dramatic and musical performance together with a Liverpool accent maintained throughout. The simple but effective sets were handled efficiently, while the lighting, props and costumes added to the occasion. Overall, a great theatrical occasion. Not long ago we were wondering about the scarcity of future stage performers. No problem now, they are there in some quantity thanks to the hard working tutors working with this group and others like them.



THE SHOP AT SLY CORNER

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby
Presented by: **RETFORD LITTLE THEATRE**
Venue: Retford Little Theatre
Performance Date: 2nd February 2010
Director: Shirley Thomas

Congratulations to the team responsible for the superb set complete with a vast array of curios and antiques. David Lintin's performance as Descius Heiss (the fence of stolen property) could scarcely be faulted and David Larder's portrayal of the fairly wily crook, Corder Morris was equally telling. Adam Gibson and Robert Moore are both still in their teens and newcomers to RLT stage. Both acted well with Robert's Archie being particularly pleasing. Another newcomer to the group, Carole Kitchen, put in a memorable performance as Mrs Catt, the daily help, who was most amusing. The rest of the cast played their parts well, although there were instances where valuable lines were lost through being delivered far too quickly. On the whole the costumes were suitable for the late nineteen forties. A thriller by Edward Percy, this is an old play but it stands the test of time well holding the audience's rapt attention right up to the final moments. Congratulations.

DICK WHITTINGTON

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby
Presented by: **LINDSEY RURAL PLAYERS**
Venue: Broadbent Theatre, Wickenby
Performance date: 6th February 2010
Director: Abigail Wright
Choreographer: Nathan Rounce

This pantomime, written by Jan Allen, who was also responsible for the musical accompaniment, gave the audience plenty of chances to hiss, boo and cheer. Abigail Wright made an ideal Principal Boy while Annette Holland was charming as Alice. Peter Langston achieved a true Jekyll and Hyde act when turning from Signor Vasellino and Marcus Holland's energetic Gellino was great. Mellissa Horton was most impressive as Tom, a really cultured, sophisticated cat. Ian Myers was hilarious as Dame Daphne Dumpling and Thomas Murray was amiable as her son, Harry. All the rest played their parts well. The set was very pleasing, the sound and lighting were most effective and the costumes were delightful. Well done, everyone.

BABES IN THE WOOD

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby
Presented by: **TRUSTHORPE VILLAGE HALL THEATRE GROUP**
Venue: Trusthorpe Village Hall
Performance Dates: 16th February 2010
Directors: Sue Drummond, Rose Scott and Jeanette Willson
Musical Director: Michael Willson
Choreographers: Sue Drummond, Zoe Hackett, Rose Parnell and Jemma Willson

Written by David and Michael Willson, this was a truly delightful production. At times the accompaniment was a tad overloud, but the choice of songs incorporated in the story was very pleasing. These included several by the late Aubrey Parker who for many years was the group's M.D. The Babes, Sam and Sarah, were well played, Jemma Willson and Kate Drummond were suitably dashing as Robin Hood and Will Scarlett and they worked well with Samantha Goddard and Jordanne Sleaf (Maid Marian and Mary). There was comedy aplenty from Chris Pratt (Nurse Benelyn), Connor White and Jordan Baker (Brain and Less), Isaac Bailey (Friar Tuck) and Gareth Kiedyk as Jack. The 'baddies' were Baron Hardup and of course the Sheriff of Nottingham and they deserved the barrage of boos and hisses they received. The set was most impressive with scene changes taking place smoothly, the lighting and sound were fine and the costumes were stunning. The chorus and the rest of the cast played their parts confidently and the dance routines were well rehearsed and attractive. Well done.

ANIMAL FARM

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby
Presented by: **WHARFINGERS YOUTH GROUP. LOUTH**
Venue: Riverhead Theatre, Louth
Performance dates: 17th February 2010
Directors: Helen Appleton and Carloe Ashcroft

I almost decided to turn vegetarian due entirely to this powerful drama. There was much to applaud. The main animal characters were nicely defined and it was interesting to see the pigs gradually gaining supremacy over the rest of the animals. Also it was compelling to note the characteristics of the different groups of animals faithfully reproduced by the actors. Similarly, the costumes had been carefully designed to reflect the different species. The set was wonderfully constructed to show a farmyard scene typical of sixty or so years ago. The props were remarkably authentic. Good use was made of the space on stage with the youngsters moving fairly quietly and smoothly as required. This was an excellent piece, but several prompts were needed and toward the end of the production some valuable lines were lost through over-enthusiasm in a drunken scene. These, however, are small criticisms for the show was extremely well done in every other respect. Congratulations.

THE ROCKIN' PIED PIPER

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby
Presented by: **SAXILBY DRAMA CIRCLE**
Venue: Saxilby Community Hall
Performance Dates: 18th February 2010
Director: Geoff Bridge
Musical Director: Ian Atkinson
Asst. Director/Choreographer: Moira Chrstie

This was an evening of toe-tapping mainly Sixties numbers one after the other in fairly rapid succession with snappy dialogue interspersed. Adrian Pick and Ian Atkinson were resplendent and in good voice as brothers Alvis (Elvis?) and Airron Tesley with Paul Harrison as their mother, Gladys. The 'groupie ladies' were in sparkling form, too. Jonathan Mellor was suitably evil as the Pied Piper and David Makepeace and Chris Siddall made the most of their lines as King and Queen Rat. The rest of the main characters and the youthful chorus entered into the spirit of things and gave valuable support. Congratulations to those responsible for the set and the costumes which were excellent. The musical accompaniment was taped throughout.....toe-tapping, as I said earlier. An exciting, action-packed production with a lot of appeal.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE DAME IS UGLY

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby
Presented by: **CHERRY PLAYERS**
Venue: Cherry Willingham Community School
Performance dates: 19th February 2010
Directors/ Choreographers: Rachel Dodson and Katie Cheetham

Billed as a Wild West Panto, this was written by Rachel Dodson and proved to be great fun. The costumes in the main were strictly Western of gingham and denim with cowboy-style boots and ten-gallon hats. These were most effective. Lively dance routines were a notable feature of this show and included a tap dance, a can can and an energetic hoedown. The set comprised typical Wild West venues like Winnie's Ranch, Lil's Saloon Bar and an Indian Reservation. Scene-changes took place easily. Strong leads included the Dame (Winnie Pegg), the local Sheriff, the leading lady and the hero Clint Westwood. The rest of the named characters played their roles extremely well, too, and the chorus' participation was most impressive. Here again, the accompaniment was courtesy of taped music. The lighting was complementary. Well done.

DISTRICT 5

SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE

PETER BREACH

BEAUTY IS A BEAST

Review by: Pater Breach
Presented by: **BOSTON CHILDREN'S THEATRE**
Venue: The Blackfriars Arts Centre
Director: Clare White

Prior to the performance of this play we were treated to a selection of poems that were chosen and recited or read by members of the company, aged between 8 and 11 years. Some poems were well known while the children had specially written others. Besides providing a vocal warm-up, this part of the proceedings provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate voice projection and diction. Their performances were impressive and well received by the audience.

After the poems they performed 'Beauty Is A Beast', a play for adults and children, performed by children. The story features the activities of two sisters, Princess Beauty who is selfish and unkind and Princess Honor who is caring and has a very pleasant nature. All of the players gave convincing performances, demonstrating that they had a clear understanding of the plot, and worked together to promote the moral message that what makes a person beautiful is not so much their outward appearance but what they are like inside. This young cast showed a lot of enthusiasm for their respective roles and were quickly into character for which the Director is to be commended. The medieval costumes were well chosen and were shown off by numerous lighting changes. Props were minimal but put to good use. There were a few prompts but these certainly did not interrupt the flow of the story. The stage crew performed their duties efficiently and executed some quick set changes. I was much impressed with the aim of Princess Beauty who managed to hit someone every time she threw something - she must have practised diligently!

This was indeed a delightful evening's entertainment. Well done Boston Children's Theatre.

'STEPTOE & SON' AND 'FAWLTY TOWERS'

Review by: Pater Breach
Presented by: **BOSTON PLAYGOERS**
Performance dates: 24th to 27th February 2010
Venue: The Blackfriars Arts Centre
Directors: Mike Sheridan-Shinn and Paul Gibson

This comedy double bill featured extracts from two very popular television series that were presented in such detail that none of the original humour was lost in transferring them from the small screen to the stage. This was largely due to the superb casting of the main characters, skilful direction and very clever acting.

STEPTOE & SON

Jon Molson gave a first rate performance as Harold Steptoe, even managing to adopt the speech patterns of the late Harry H. Corbett, while Danny Chester-Bush, suitably aged in appearance thanks to his make-up, acquitted himself admirably as his father, Albert Steptoe. Marilyn Cobb, Melissa Marlowe, Glyn Ruskin and Alan Whyte all executed their supporting roles well in this stage version.

FAWLTY TOWERS

Dave Edgar who is of similar build to John Cleese (perhaps even a little taller) gave an outstanding performance as Basil Fawlty. Rachel Pick (Sybil), Kathryn Walker (Polly), Trevor Fenton (Manuel), John Lingard (the Major), Lucy Taylor (Miss Tibbs), Alma Watts (Miss Gatsby) and Liz Fenton (Mrs Richards) were quickly recognisable as principal characters from this show and there was assistance from numerous other 'hotel guests'.

Both productions were serviced by an efficient stage crew and had well designed sets that were dressed in great detail. Particular praise must go to Liz Worsley, whose handiwork provided the huge bear and magnificent moose that featured prominently in these shows. Well-done Liz! These successful productions attracted sizeable audiences and provided great entertainment.

DISTRICT 6A

NORTH LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND

MARTIN TAILBY

No reviews available.

DISTRICT 6B

SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE & LEICESTER

CHRISTINE CLARKE

No reviews available.

MOTHER GOOSE

Review by: Kevin Sheen
Presented by: **WELLINGBOROUGH PANTOMIME SOCIETY**
Venue: The Castle, Wellingborough
Performance dates: 12th to 16th January 2010
Director: Sue Bailey

This was Pantomime as it should be. Bright, colourful, with a good script well performed with a nice mix of traditional and contemporary Panto numbers. The goodies were good, the baddies were bad and the Dame hovered between the two but eventually 'saw the light' and helped save the day.

One thing that struck me from the start was the clarity of diction from all. Though there was a smattering of dialects from all over Britain on display throughout the production the delivery was clear and concise. Well done to all – especially Amy Beth James as The Fairy. The Direction (Sue Bailey) was extremely good (no serried ranks of villagers to speak of) and the Musical Direction (Keith Green) equally so. I thought 'The sun has got his hat on' was a little too long and, though there wasn't too much harmony singing, what there was (apart from the odd note in 'In the money') was performed very well. The back stage crew –so often overlooked – were very professional; Silent. Congratulations to Garry Mawbey and his team for their efforts.

Jack and Jill (Kristina Hickman and Sarah Hollands) gave strong performances and worked well together. Well done. Shaun Johnson (The Demon) and Nick Gough (The Baron) played their respective roles in traditional style and are both worthy of mention. Very well done to both. Indeed the same could be said for each 'principal' but in particular David Wicks as Mother Goose (the classic Dame desperate for a man) and Jon Baish as Billy Goose who flitted about the stage on what seemed like rubber legs and built a rapport with the audience without overplaying it. Extremely well done Jon.

But finally I would like to comment on the dancers and, in particular, the choreography. Anyone who reads my reports know that, due to my own limitations in the dance area, I am a big admirer of choreographers who put the performers first and set according to the levels of the troupe they are working with. This was the perfect case in point. Whilst the dances looked slick and effortless to the audience it is the choreography behind it that makes it so. Take a bow Kim Mallows and team.

CINDERELLA

Review by: Kevin Sheen
Presented by: **IRCHESTER PLAYERS**
Venue: Parsons Hall, Irchester
Performance dates: 10th to 13th February 2010
Director: Steve Lack

This was a clever take on the pantomime being backed, as it was, entirely by Abba music. It was equally as cleverly directed by Steve Lack (who also wrote it) and he extracted some very nice performances from a company who seemed totally focussed and determined to enjoy every minute of a show full of innuendo and jokes both old and new.

The back stage crew had their work cut out but deserve praise for their efforts on the night. Very well done to Greg McClean and his team. As for performances there were some that stood but that does not mean those not mentioned below did not contribute to an all round strong performance – this was a very good show. Dandini (Alison Everitt) was good throughout. She looked the part, played the part and pulled others along with her. Very well done. The Baroness, Tutti and Frutti Hardup (Sue Gough, Scott Murphy-Hill and Ian Southon) all played their roles with a nice balance of 'nasty and nice' and entertained the audience from start to finish. Cinderella (Ashleigh Dodson) was a little hard to hear at times but she worked extremely well with Buttons (Daniel Wainright) and endeared herself to the audience. Buttons was excellent. Strong delivery, excellent rapport with the audience and some quick thinking one-liners.

The Abba singers (Jill Hilton, Zoe Beaumont, Jodie Cooper and Terri Barnes) added some nice harmonies and both they and Dinah Stevenson (Musical Director) deserve acknowledgement for their efforts. Well done.

However, the highlight of the show for me was the rendition of 'Slipping thro my fingers' as performed by Baron Hardup (Ian Draisey). The song suited his voice and, though I would have preferred to hear him sing it alone, was the highlight of the show. He delivered it with feeling and silenced the audience with his performance. Spot on.

DEATH BY FATAL MURDER

Review by: Kevin Sheen
Presented by: **WOLLASTON THEATRICAL SOCIETY**
Venue: Parochial Rooms, Wollaston
Performance dates: 16th to 19th February 2010
Director: Ian Roberts

Suffice to say this was a very good all round performance.

Despite the hiccups with the lighting during the first act, (which you could do nothing about as it turned out to be an external issue) and a lack of pace during the 'séance' scene this was a very well performed show from start to finish. The set was good, the costumes and props equally so.

David Mander (Inspector Pratt) expertly headed the cast and delivered a performance befitting a bigger stage. Very well done. He was ably supported by Alan Akers (Constable Thomkins) who, although a little unsure of his lines at times, gave a good performance in his own right.

Despite having one of the smaller roles Kim Underwood (Ginny Farquhar) gave a very credible performance (excellent laugh too) and was more than matched by Ian Roberts (Enzo Garibaldi) who used a typical 'Captain Bertorelli' accent to bolster his 'fake Italian' role.

Indeed 'typical' accents littered the production along with good performances. Clive Hart (Sq Ldr Allwright), Les Underwood (Blodwyn Morgan) and Gemma Richards (Nancy Allwright) all gave more than credible performances and deserve recognition.

Olivia Hart (Miss Joan Maple) was extremely well cast in this role. Her look, demeanour and performance were all very reminiscent of Miss 'Jane' Marple herself and she impressed throughout. Very well done.

BAD GIRLS – THE MUSICAL

Review by: Kevin Sheen
Presented by: **THEATREWORKZ**
Venue: The Masque, Kettering
Performance dates: 25th to 27th February 2010
Director: Neil Richardson

Let's cut straight to the chase. This was a strong performance from a society with strength in depth. A very funny script with some memorable songs was delivered in style to an appreciative audience. Indeed, had it not been for the sound issues that periodically plagued this performance and created an imbalance between the Band and the performers at times, we would not be talking 'Amateur' Dramatics. The Direction (Neil Richardson) was extremely good and the opening scene in particular made the audience feel slightly uncomfortable which is exactly what was required. The use of the visual and sound effects created an atmosphere befitting the piece and was enhanced by the minimalist set.

Anita Walker made full use of the talent on offer and extracted some excellent harmonies whilst also finding time to choreograph! Extremely well done.

It is normal to find one or two performers in each society who shine brighter than the others. This was not really the case in this show. Teresa Webb (Sylvia Hollamby), Jenine Grover (Crystal Gordon), Debbie Spooner (Julie Johnston), Louise Hough (Nikki Wade), Mark Walker (Jim Fenner), Caroline Jenkins (Denny Blood), Ruth Bowe (Yvonne Atkins) and especially Maxine Anthony (Noreen Biggs) and Becky Mineards (Julie Saunders) all produced impressive performances and were more than ably supported by the rest of the cast; a cast that contained strong performers in their own right.

DISTRICT 8

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE & MILTON KEYNES

NANETTE LOVELL

BUGSY MALONE

Review by: Nanette Lovell
Presented by: **THE HARDINGSTONE PLAYERS**
Venue: Champion School, Bugbrooke
Performance dates: 17th to 20th February 2010
Director: Karen Lowe
Musical Director: David Cole
Choreographer: Fiona Coles

Most people think of Bugsy Malone as a production for children but the Hardingstone Players decided to bring all age groups in from 8 to 60! And it really worked. The company was led by Jamie Phillips as 'Bugsy' who was well supported by Gemma Flegg 'Blousey', Simon Wolfenden as 'Fat Sam', and Wendy Lawrence as 'Tallulah'. With a cast of 27 on stage it is not possible to mention everyone much as I would like to. Everyone worked very hard and it was obvious the amount of rehearsal time that must have gone in to this fast moving production. Brilliant costumes and props all added to the authentic atmosphere of the late 1920's. The production numbers worked well, especially the boxing scene with everyone on stage suitably dressed in boxing gear! This must be a production that director Karen Lowe must be so proud of. Well done to everyone on stage, backstage and front of house. You battled with the snow - and won!