

NODA Review

THE PIED PIPER

Performed by NOMADS at Kings Theatre Newmarket

Directed by Jamie Maguire

Musical Director Mark Aldous

Choreographer Jodie Corbett

My first panto of 2020 and it was a very enjoyable evening. There is a tendency for pantomimes to be overlong but I am pleased to say that this panto was just the right length, long enough to be entertaining and contain all the traditional 'panto' ingredients but short enough to keep the children, young and old, in the audience engaged. Director Jamie Maguire and choreographer Jodie Corbett together produced a fairly pacy, fun production.

Musical Director Mark Aldous and The Bratwursts were in top melodic form. I particularly enjoyed Yakety Sax and Out of Our Chairs. The choreography was excellent and well executed by all, even the tiniest performer. The company was well drilled and did Jodie proud with the execution of her routines.

The staging was very colourful but I would caution the use, or rather control, of the smoke machine. Entering the auditorium was like walking into a Victorian London fog and it didn't clear very quickly. It was quite a talking point in the interval. The backcloths were all very good as was the lighting. The sound design by Blueshed Studios gave good balance between musicians and singers and use of body mics was exceptional. The costumes by design trio Sarah Smith, Wallace Wareham and Marion Hadley were, as always with this company, outstanding and was evidence of a lot of hard work behind the scenes, particularly by Mr Beach's dresser.

The fairly large ensemble made up of some very young members of NOMADS performed with lots of energy and obvious enjoyment throughout. Everyone stayed focused and the singing and dancing were well done.

The principals all gave very good performances. There was a fine partnership between Giselle Monkhouse and Kay Fasulo as Blatter and Splatter, who handled the comedy in their double act well. Karen Thorpe was extremely good as Pippin, the Pied Piper and Claire Tuttle (Hans), April Murfet (Burgomeister) and Lauren Hobbs (Heidi) all produced very strong performances in their roles.

Deanne Haynes Vas Young made an absolutely superb Sour-Kraut and, as her sidekick Rat-Worst, Ryan Smith made a first-rate villain. Fighting the good fight was Esther McIntyre who sparkled as the good Fairy Strudel.

Steven Beach was in top form as Dame Helga von Trump (no relation); he has a natural talent for comedy and the ability to think on his feet onstage. Along with an exuberant performance by Colin Scott as the Dame's son Willie this duo produced some excellent comedy throughout the show.

Pantomime is jolly hard work so well done to everyone on stage, backstage and front of house. I always receive a warm welcome and an enjoyable evening at the Kings Theatre and this show was no exception.

Julie Petrucci

Regional Representative NODA East District Four South.