

NODA Review

DICK WHITTINGTON

NOMADS at The Kings Theatre, Newmarket

Directed by Elliott Papworth

Musical Director: Mark Aldous

Choreographer: Jess Clifford

NOMADS' annual panto this time was *Dick Whittington* from the pen of **Elliott Papworth**, who also directed. Elliott has a good feel for writing panto and enjoys including slosh scenes which suits NOMADS down to the ground because they do them so well.

The twenty-four strong cast went at it with a will carrying out **Jess Clifford's** well-rehearsed dance routines and handling the musical numbers well. Congratulations to Musical Director **Mark Aldous** and The Tangfastics! The music was great and the sound balance between Band and singers just right. The lighting and sound was fine with not a crackle on the body mics - well done! As always **Sarah Smith's** costumes were beautiful and colourful particularly the Finale/Bows. I did have a bit of trouble initially identifying Alice as she blended in with the Ensemble costumes so well. I wasn't sure about all the Londoners being in matching polka dots but realise there was a theme running through it. The set was good and congratulations to **Alan Gleed** on that and also the Tooty Fruity 5000 machine plus whoever was working it. There was nice swift and virtually silent scene changes from Stage Manager **Alex Matthews** and the stage crew too.

The Pantomime had been well cast, and there were some strong performances. Top marks to **Oliver Squires** for his as King Rat. This was a powerful performance in every way. His first entrance certainly saw off one child sitting in the front who, happily, moved seats and enjoyed the remainder of the show. **Anita Marshall** created a nice Cockney Fairy Bowbells and although her role was to keep the story moving on I did think some of her dialogue was slightly over-written.

The main principals were excellent. **Lauren Godfrey** in the titular role especially. Much use was rightly made of her super voice. **Faye Dower** as Tommy the Cat created some nice feline mannerisms and also treated us to a neat piece of tap dancing. **Victoria Brown** was beautiful as Alice Fitzwarren, Dick's love interest, handling her on-off role confidently as did **Steven Fenn** as Alderman Fitzwarren. **Claire Tuttle** was a very pretty and very generous Sultana of Morocco. **Chris Brighty** as Captain Barnacle, **Kay Fasulo** and **Giselle Monkhouse** as Rat Minions completed the principal cast apart of course **Colin Scott** as Harry Bow and **Steve Beach** as Dame Dolly Dib-Dab.

This duo really know how to work the audience. Both are quick with an ad lib too if things go awry. Steve Beach was every inch a pantomime dame, larger than life, saucy and with seemingly abundant energy. Congratulations to Dame Dolly, Harry Bow and Dick for the splendid "12 days of Panto" singalong. Exhausting stuff.

This was a good script by Elliott, with clever ideas, particularly the sweet scene. There was opportunity for audience participation (although maybe more use could have been made of Harry's running response joke in Act 1 because by Act 2 we had all forgotten how to respond!); lots of jokes and slapstick comedy. A fun production throughout. Well done everyone.

Julie Petrucci

Regional Representative NODA East District Four South