

**RAPUNZEL** Mackelvie Nelson  
NOMADS (Newmarket Operatic, Music & Dramatic Society)  
Kings Theatre, Newmarket  
Director: Sarah Smith  
Musical Director: Nicholas Sheehan  
Choreographer: Jodie Corbett

There have been various versions of Rapunzel as a pantomime over the last few years, more so since the release of Disney's 2010 film "Tangled". Rapunzel is a young princess kept unaware of her royal heritage by a vain old woman named Mother Gothel, who raises her in a secluded tower to exploit her hair's healing abilities to remain young and beautiful forever. Not the usual run of the mill panto fodder but the tale does lend itself to lots of hairdressing jokes.

NOMADS' pantomime nicely directed by Sarah Smith certainly did not lack "hair" jokes starting with the characters' names. We had Dame Hetty Hairspray, King and Queen Bouffant, Prince Vidal (Sassoon), Captain Quiff, Lieutenant Backcomb and Fairy L'Oréal. We also had some first-rate scenery, including a wonderful tower for Rapunzel, props and scenic cloths. Sarah Smith and her team supplied 75+ costumes which were all exceptional. Lighting was good and sound levels were just right.

The pretty wordy first act did not have the pace that the second act did and, although the songs were well dealt with, they were not that familiar. The songs in act two were much livelier.

The Musical Direction in the hands of Nicholas Sheehan, particularly the Ensemble singing, was very good indeed and, as always, the talented Jodie Corbett created choreography which was never same-y but always lively and well executed.

The Ensemble made up of the Dance Team and the Villagers were kept busy throughout the show and all gave their fullest commitment. Their overall contribution to the show was commendable.

All pantos have a good versus evil element and the "good" came in the form of Ailish Collins who gave a nice confident performance as Fairy L'Oréal. Also on the "good" side was Rampion the Sprite, Fairy L'Oréal's assistant, played by Leia Schultz who gave a supremely confident performance from her well delivered first line to her last. I don't know how old Leia is but she certainly held her own against more mature and experienced cast members. Leia is certainly one to watch and I am sure she will grace many stages in the future. What would we do without a baddie to boo? Well we certainly had one in Alice Turner who was suitably wicked as Mother Gothel the evil witch who imprisoned Rapunzel.

Steven Beach was on great form as Dame Hetty Hairspray and you can always bank on Steven slipping one or two "naughties" in for the adults without actually being rude! Dame Hetty was well supported by her son Harry played with confidence by young Zack-Rhys Wymer who is fast learning how to work an audience. Two fine performances. Good support too came from Alex Schosland as Captain Quiff, Nigel Witney as Lieutenant Backcomb and Steven Fenn and Marion Hadley as King and Queen Bouffant.

Abbie Good made a great Prince Vidal who risked all to rescue Rapunzel. A performer with good stage presence and an excellent voice. The titular role of Rapunzel was beautifully played by the extremely talented Charlie-May Wallis who is a first rate actress with a great voice. I am sure we will be seeing a great deal more of her.

What a super start for my 2023 year of amateur theatre. Thank you NOMADS for a great, if exceedingly cold, evening's entertainment.

Julie Petrucci  
Regional Representative NODA East District 4 South