

CINDERELLA

Saturday Night Live, it was a full house.

At curtain up the audience was transported into an exciting panto-land: sumptuous scenery, magnificent costumes, with quality make-up and hairstyles. 'Spot on' stage lighting and a crystal clear sound system further enhanced the atmosphere. The word-perfect cast (well almost!) together with the crew worked brilliantly as a team, to bring us this dazzling new production. Richard Vodden, the accomplished Musical Director, provided live music and special sound effects. This complex layering of virtual and real dimensions delivered a visual and audio delight, stimulating intricate ideas, evoked the true spirit of pantomime. Each time a new lavish scene was unveiled, a heartfelt gasp could be heard from the audience. To the amusement of all, the massive stage curtain became stuck on its rail – there was a spontaneous cheer when the curtain was eventually drawn back.



The talented Emily Marsh was perfectly cast as Cinderella, the downtrodden waif of a scullery maid, who was transformed into the belle of the ball. She interacted especially well with the assured Lynsey Nicholls who cut a dashing Prince Charming and with the madcap groovy Justin Bowers ably played by Johnny Robbins.

We soon encountered Tony Jordan (Tamazepam) and Andrew Bevan (Prozac), who provided us with a double helping of energised mega Titan Ugliers. Their nubile faux femininity (yeah, they were Dames), coupled with a performance packed with wild enthusiasm and falsetto voices, at times, left their evil stepmother somewhat battered and ear bashed - in more ways than one!

The multi-layered script gave all the children the opportunity to be fully involved. They clearly enjoyed acting, singing and dancing their roles, from villagers to cartoon heroes to pixies, elves and fairies. What a joy to see.

Strictly Come Dancing fans who were suffering from Saturday night withdrawal symptoms were given an extra special treat with The Players own, their very own Strictly Dumb Dancing. Tom Smart was extra smart in a white dinner jacket, brimming with confidence he delivered a Brucie persona to an interactive enthusiastic audience. Our local MP, the incomparable Steve Pound, gave his all as Len Badman and proved he is a good judge and a great sport. In the final moments of the panto the scriptwriter delivered an unscripted custard pie, in the customary style, to the immaculately dressed Steve! It appeared that Tamazepam's religious conversion would be short lived!



There was plenty of ad-libbing too, for instance in ‘The 12 Days of Christmas’ scene with Malcolm Ede (Pauly), Ray Allen (Count Lollo Rosso), Johnny Robbins and Tom Smart, singing, dashing around the stage and running into the auditorium. By accident the neck of a rubber chicken (one of two, as in ‘Two Turtle Doves’) stretched several feet then snapped back just missing Justin’s head. His knee jerk reaction flipped his lush wig and horn-rimmed specs into the air! The offending chicken was thrown deep into the audience, chirpy Justin then sang out “One rubber chicken!” You had to be there to fully appreciate it! And if you were you would have got wet!



It’s always good to watch the clergy and officials of the parish caught up in panto mayhem, Churchwarden Ray Allen and PCC Treasurer Malcolm Ede were both in top form. Unfortunately due to illness, Neil, our Rector, could not appear as King Elegant - however his understudy Dennis Troughton played the King with zing.

From start to finish the stage crew created several surprises, including a surreal, almost a David Copperfield magic moment. High above the stage, in the dark of the night, partly obscured by the top rails of the scenery curtains, a coach and horses with flowing silver manes appeared – then disappeared transporting Cinderella to the ball. Later, a film was projected on to this lofty area showing her speedy exit from the ball.

Jim Hunter, the Producer continues his brilliant run as the lynchpin of Holy Cross pantos. The Holy Cross Players have been entertaining the people of Greenford since 1982 and next January will be putting on their 25th anniversary family pantomime. Congratulations to the ineffably sublime husband and wife partnership of Tony (Writer) and Nicky (Director) for an outstanding panto (oh yes it was!). The cast and crew had been working very hard for months to bring us our rich tradition of community panto. With performances night after night, night after matinee the talents of some 80 people were brought together. Brilliant! Alright on the night!



Here’s looking forward to our 2007 community panto, I wonder if it will be

DAVID CLARKE

“It was a feast of the unexpected for me. I loved Tony Jordan’s slant on the story and on the well loved characters. What gave me most pleasure was the ball becoming a dancing competition and the confidence of the children who fitted smoothly into the team work which made humorous or beautiful patterns out of differing physiques.”

Mac McLaughlin

“Enjoyed the panto. I bet everyone who was involved is shattered today, it’s a lot of work.”

Melanie Weston 8th January