



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Review by Tessa Davies

Director – Deborah Jea

Musical Director – Sally Catling

Performed at War Memorial Hall, Canvey Island on Saturday 26 November 2016 at 6.30pm

Cast and Crew have not done a panto before so I was very interested to see that they had not gone with the tried and tested scripts but had tackled something completely different. It was a good decision, the script is very well written with plenty of opportunity for the cast to deliver all the traditional panto gags. It may not have been a traditional Panto tale but it had all the panto elements you could wish for and the children absolutely loved it, as did the adults!

This venue had a very small stage and even smaller wing space (well none really!) so they did extremely well to have several scene changes. Everything is done by the company and it is clearly a strong team which works together well.

The action started in the auditorium with Dolly and her Trolley, very well played by Zayna Hull. Doing that sort of close-up performance takes a lot of skill and ability and Zayna has it in spades. Once the show had really started we were treated to a series of really good performances. Starting with Lou Brewster as Snorri Snorrison the saga teller, whose role was primarily to move the show along across the scene changes and, teaming with Dolly, they kept the pace up well.

Matthew Willis was a terrific villain (Smut the Smug) I loved the look and his rapport with the audience was excellent. Sarah Lepley (Eric Big Axe) and Trudy Ann Britnell (Thor Smallsword) gave excellent performances as the traditional duo of stupid henchmen. Jeff Hodgkins was also excellent as Dame Dustpan, delivering the excruciating gags with great style and fun. Sally Catling's performance as Sven was perfect Panto Principal boy stuff. Hayley Ashby (Filofax) provided the fun element of the partnership and Vicki Charman was delightful as the erstwhile princess.

There were many more in the cast but I just don't have the space to mention them all, they did, however, all give excellent performances and the rapport with the audience, which is so important to a successful panto, was there all the time.

I have mentioned the scenery already but I particularly like the entrance of the sleigh, beautifully executed scenery design! The costumes were good, mostly quite simple but very well designed. Cast and Crew have made a great production for their first panto, I hope it remains a fixture in their calendar for years to come.

Tessa Davies