



Society : Quince Players
Production : **RUMPELSTILTZKIN**
Date : Wednesday 23rd January 2013
Venue : Cordes Hall, Sunninghill
Report by : Gordon Bird, NODA Representative, Area 14

Report

On Wednesday 23rd January I was very pleased to be invited to see Quince Player's annual pantomime. This year they performed Norman Robbins 1978 version of **Rumpelstilzkin**. I was worried that using such an old script it would have dated but the production team updated the script here and there and introduced some topical references plus a good choice of up to date songs that made the script fresh which worked very well.

This production was smoothly performed with good understanding of the characters. The set was exceptionally well painted and constructed.

King Marmaduke of Mirth (BRENT WHITTED)

As the part of the King, Brent produced a good, strong performance with excellent characterisation and mannerisms. Brent produced some lovely facial expressions, a skill that is sometimes lacking in some performers, but here was someone who can "speak" volumes by a reaction or a look. He certainly looked the part and commanded the stage with his presence. It is unusual for a character to be killed off and was disappointed that we did not see more of him in the second half.

Prince Roland (SOPHIE LINCOLN)

This was a lovely portrayal of the principal role by Sophie. She performed a good, consistent character but she did appear a little nervous at times but I am sure that this improved during the run.

Alan, Squire to the Prince (ALISDAIR CLENNAN)

Rosamund, his sweetheart (ALISON RAMSDEN)

An additional love interest to the piece, **ALISDAIR** and **ALISON** performed well. There was plenty of energy applied by the pair in "*You are the one I want*". There was pleasant interaction between the couple that added to their performance.

Mother Hubbard (NICK TEALE)

Nick performed an impressive performance as the pantomime Dame, with a good rapport with the audience and camaraderie with his colleagues on stage. The costumes and makeup of course help the characterisation but it still needs a confident performer which Nick produced perfectly.

Grettle, her daughter (JESSICA ENGLAND)

At times it was difficult to remember that Jessica is only 15, as she looked so relaxed on stage. She sung very well and performed a pleasant principal girl role. There were times when you spoke a little too quickly which made it difficult to hear what you were saying (particularly the flax to gold speech at the beginning). Just slow down your delivery because all the attributes of a fine performer are there. Jessica certainly has a beautiful singing voice but I did think it was little quiet but I am sure this will develop as your confidence and experience grows. Well done!

Sammy Slowcoach (GORDON COE)

The “buttons” character was played sympathetically by Gordon who showed good comic timing and a good understanding of his character. He worked well with the audience and ensured that he received all the “oohs” and “aahs” in the right place.

Baron Blutshot (HUW MORDECAI)

The baddie of this pantomime was performed by Huw as Baron Blutshot. His characterisation was perfect, enjoying a good (or is it “bad”) rapport with the audience.

Smash (ALLISON SHARPE)

Grabb (JULIE VOICE)

Comic roles are a joy to watch when they are in such skilled hands as these two performers. They both set out their characters from the off and never let up. The comic timing was spot on and clearly enjoyed their parts just as much as the audience enjoyed watching them. I loved the range of colourful costumes (and associated personalised “props”) that certainly enhanced their characters.

Rumpelstilzkin (SIMONSHAW)

The opening song “*Fame*” was a little nervous but I felt that you grew more and more into the role and performed an imaginative characterisation as Rumpelstilzkin. He had lovely movement and mannerisms that helped clearly define the character. This was an exceedingly wonderful performance by Simon.

Guards (TOBY ADAMSON, HAYLEY PURSER, ALISON RAMSDEN & SUZANNE SAPSED)

Added some humour to the scenes and they certainly all had individual characters that one could easily identify, even though some of them did not even have any lines. However, I am not quite sure that it was “believable” to the scenes they were in, and tasks they had to perform and would question the effectiveness. However, this is pantomime, and anything goes and they certainly looked like they were enjoying themselves and I was impressed with the consistency of their characterisations.

Goslings (LUCY MATTHEWS, NIAHM REID-SMITH & GEORGE UNDERWOOD)

Good performance from these youngsters, particularly as they had to very effectively start the show by interacting with the audience.

Villagers, Courtiers, Fairies

The chorus performed the roles as villagers, courtiers and fairies. Entrances and exits were well executed and clearly efforts had been made to ensure that everyone had a unique characterisation. One thing I always look out for is how the chorus perform on stage. Seeing chorus members smile during songs and dances is so infectious making the audience enjoy the show too. I was particularly impressed with **RAFFI JOHNSON & ROWENA WINSTONE** who in every song and dance showed tremendous enthusiasm. Well done!

Director (MELANIE TRAPNELL)
Assistant Director (JENNY BROWN)
Technical Director (PETER FITZWATER)

Well done a smooth production. I liked the opening sequence with the goslings coming through the audience. Some of the songs had wonderful energy (for example in the songs "*You are the one I want*", "*Time Warp*") Most of the blocking looked very well thought out but I was not too keen on the straight line in the tower scene when the principals were waiting for the King to arrive and it just needed some of them to move out of the line. But this is a small point and should not detract from a good, slick performance with everyone knowing what they are doing, with entrances and exits well rehearsed. I felt the casting was spot on. There was good pace to the show (helped by good scene changes) and on the whole prompt line delivery. A small oddity – I could not understand why RUMPELSTILTZKIN was in the second line for the curtain call and would love to know the reason behind it. I know he was dead at that point, but so was the King.

Musical Director (ANGELA McCARTHY)
Backing Tracks (GUY BUNCE)
Musical Assistant (KATH de la HARPE)

It is wonderful to hear live sound rather than heavily rely on backing tracks that is becoming the norm for amateur societies these days. **Angela** along with **Peter Holmes** and **Simon Wood** produced a lovely sound to the performance. There were certainly a difference and I preferred the live sound to that of the backing tracks, although of course I understand the constraints on societies meaning the necessity. It would have been wonderful to hear all of the songs performed by the "band" as they worked so well together and produced a wonderful sound. On a note about the musical direction, clearly **Angela** and her team had worked well with the cast and principals as they all performed the songs effectively.

Stage Manager (GEMMA SWAISLAND)

The stage looked very well run on the night I watched the show, with slick scene changes.

Backstage Crew & Properties

The crew slickly moved the scene changes (however, what a shame they missed one of the flats being turned). All the properties looked appropriate to the production and I did not notice anything amiss.

Sound (CHRIS EVA)

The sound effects were all performed on cue and at the right volume.

Set

There were some lovely quick scene changes that helped keeping the pace going. The side flats were secured with a central screw which meant they could simply be turned round 180° to quickly reveal another scene. However, on the night I watched one of the flats was forgotten so the effect was lost. The painted backdrops were superbly, imaginatively produced. I liked the idea of having painted backs of chairs on the set, meaning that the crew only had to bring on the "seats" enabling a quick scene change but producing an effective scene. The painted backdrops, particularly the wood scene, were of the highest quality so my compliments to all of those involved.

Wardrobe Mistress (DIANE GOSDEN)

Wardrobe and Makeup Assistants (HEATHER KING & JORDAN COULES)

The range of costumes, particularly the two comic characters of Smash and Grabb, were excellent. Clearly this team have worked hard on making, sourcing and purchasing costumes for the variety parts. I liked the idea of the goslings imaginatively wearing simple but effective costumes. The dame was appropriately attired as were the various principal characters.

Programme

The 20 page programme was once again of excellent quality. It was interesting to read, with clear, colour cast photographs. I am not sure if Quince Players have considered entering their programme for the NODA programme competition because in my opinion this is one of the best I have seen.

Front of House

Once again Quince Players front of house team were pleasant and efficient making my partner and I very welcome but without being too intrusive. Thank you for a lovely evening.

I thoroughly enjoyed this performance of Rumpelstilzkin and look forward to the next production later in the year.

Gordon Bird

NODA representative

London Region, District 14