

STAINES MUSICAL THEATRE GROUP
‘DICK WHITTINGTON’ – DECEMBER 2023

I believe that this is the first pantomime you have staged and you certainly did it justice. The hall was buzzing and full of expectation – that seating format works really well because often when seated on the flat it's a struggle to see all of the action on stage.

The traditional scenery/ projections were good and the costumes were full of colour and fitting for the various scenes and locations.

It was an unusual start with the Fairy Bow Belles introducing the three main characters and I liked it very much.

The first chorus number was colourful and the singing was strong and the freeze at start and end of it was most effective.

Carol Martin had the demeanour of a good fairy and played the part well.

The baddie of the piece, Queen Rat, was appropriately scary and she had the audience were booing her from the start. Sarah Squires acted the role well and I especially enjoyed her rendition of ‘Sweet Dreams are Made of This’.

Her supporting team of rats played by Emma Boyce, Jo Conlan and Debbie Reymond were wonderfully sinister and I loved the black leather jacket outfits. One of the ladies was particularly good – afraid I don't know them by name. The dance with Tommy was nicely acted out.

In the title role of Dick Whittington, Lucy Curtis had good stage presence and made a splendid principal boy.

Playing a role with no dialogue and as a cat isn't easy but Eve Pickering was endearing and acquitted herself well.

Dan was excellent as Idle Jack and he worked the audience from start to finish. The Community Song was fun and his engaging with a woman in the audience who then sang on her own was masterly. (I wondered if she were there at every performance ??) He looked as though he thoroughly enjoyed the role.

Sarah the Cook played by Robert Franck had super costumes and wigs and he made the most of the script. It seems that the dialogue for the ‘Dame’ is never particularly inspiring but is usually enhanced by numerous comments made to the audience, plus other ad-libs, and Robert was able to do just that.

Dawn Sainsbury was dazzling as Alice Fitzwarren. Her acting and singing were first rate and she made an unusually saucy principal girl. The duet with Sarah of ‘I Know Him So Well’ was priceless!

Her rather serious father was played traditionally by Kevin Harris.

The three remaining named characters added to the story and Laura O'Hara made a very dashing female Captain Crabsticks.

You are like most societies short of men and so having a Sultana instead of Sultan worked fine.

The chorus members supported strongly and the young dancers were delightful. They were well- rehearsed and a pleasure to watch.

Lynnes' direction was good and there were some nice technical touches like the video of Sarah swimming underwater. I absolutely loved the '12 Days of Christmas' – it was brilliantly done and the cast must have been exhausted at the end of the number!

The scene on the ship was notable, the blue and white nautical outfits looked super, and the costumes throughout were impressive – well done Jill!

Choreography for the adult chorus was simple but very effective.

The musical numbers were well chosen and I enjoyed them all - some quite nostalgic ones – and Guy Bunce, hidden behind the scenery, controlled the band and vocals most competently.

You were clearly keeping printing costs to a minimum but the information needed was all in the single sheet programme.

Thank you for inviting me to see your first pantomime – It was a splendid evening's entertainment which my guest and I enjoyed very much – and thank you also for your kind hospitality.

May I wish you all at SMTG a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

E. Gloria Smith

NODA SE Regional Representative – District 12