

Wickham Bishops Drama Club

Mother Goose by Alan P Frayn

4th Jan 2019

Directed by Michelle Bacon

Musical Director James Harragan

Choreographers Jenson Bacon, Charlotte Pragnell, Pauline Roast

It is always a delight to be asked to come and review a show at this friendly drama club. For 2019, Michelle Bacon, an award winning NODA director, had chosen a very traditional pantomime with all the ingredients needed to give the audience plenty to be totally immersed in. We had good and evil; a family about to be evicted by a greedy squire and his bailiffs; a king and queen and best of all a fantastic goose called Priscilla.(Debbie Irby)

The prologue was between Fairy Friendship (Rona Shone) and Demon Discontent (Charlie Willett), they both got the audience cheering and booing from the start. A credible performance was given by the two of them which helped the story along. I loved the red light stage left, as the Demon came on. I'm not sure he would have got '*Panto Baddie of the Year*' but nonetheless a good attempt. This production had great costumes and fine characters, something that we have come to now expect from this group. I also have to say that the backcloths and scenery was spot on with some great lighting in each scene, especially for the Land of Discontent. Wardrobe mistress Jenny Higgins and Scenery designers Alan Roast and Jane Smith are to be congratulated.

Mother Goose was acted by the very talented Graham Pipe, who gave an excellent performance. This actor knows how to work an audience and really did make this panto rather special. The company should be extremely proud to have someone so talented.

His daughter Jill (Leigh Parry) and her love interest Colin (James Milne) were a good combination. Their duet 'We go together' was performed extremely well and there was lots of energy from both of them and the lovely ensemble. Mother Goose's son was Billy (Nick Hewes); who asked everyone to call out '] *Don't be silly, silly Billy!* ' He was an enthusiastic, funny lad who had the role of the silly son down to a T! While he had a tough time of it on Friday night when the hall was only half full, I'm sure on the matinee he will have the full house shouting and screaming. The small audience on the Friday when we went, was such a shame, as the amount of work that went into this production was huge and my hat goes off to Michelle for all that she has done to make this show work so well.

The greedy squire McGreedy (Ross McTaggart) and his two country bumpkin bailiffs – Bill Bumpkin (James Bacon) and Ben Bogtrotter (Jordan Shynn) were very funny and added to the enjoyment of the night. Their song '*You've got a friend in me*' was delightfully off key and the audience found it hilarious. Very well done.

King Proper Gander and Queen Goosegog were extremely regal and as for Priscilla the Goose, she was excellent with wonderful noises when she laid the golden eggs. I wish my grandson had been

there as he would have loved it all plus of course the ghost scene which one just has to have in a good traditional panto. The four piece band headed by Musical Director James Harragan, gave the cast a good backing to their songs. The backstage crew moved the sets effortlessly and efficiently and props were all well made. Well done to stage manager Sam Knott and Props – Sue Matten and James Milne.

This panto was a good traditional show, with all the ingredients for both children and adults. Songs were well chosen and a good time was had by all. The ensemble of children and adults were excellent adding to the fun of the evening.

I congratulate Michelle and her team; I hope the rest of the run goes well.

Christine Davidson

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