
Babes in the Wood

Wickham Bishops Drama Club
Directed by Graham Pipe
Choreography by Pauline Roast
Musical Direction by James Tovey

At Wickham Bishops Village Hall on Friday 6th January 2017.

A great opening with a lively 'Good Morning Nottingham' particularly from the junior workshop featured in the show. This set the scene for the rest of the production. We were then introduced to some of the principal cast including Nurse Golightly, played by Charlie Willett. Charlie delivered the role with confidence and had good comic timing and no reservations about interacting with the audience. It was sometimes difficult to understand Charlie due to the pitch he was speaking at, but thankfully the microphone generally helped with this. Jingles and Sergeant Codpiece were both very popular characters on the night I watched! The audience really appreciated them, and rightly so. Both Jack Williams and Sam Knott lifted the energy on the stage and were very funny. Their rendition of Bad was very entertaining. Catherine Stott gave us a gentle and kind Maid Marion, which contrasted well with Steve Barham's Sheriff of Nottingham.

Laura Kittle played the cheeky, confident Robin Hood well. A strong lead, with a good singing voice and good clarity. Laura worked well with Moira Monti as Little John, James Milne as Much and Paul Galbraith as Too Much, and Roger Lyons as Friar Tuck. Much and Too Much were very funny and took on the traditional comedy duo role well, both very entertaining. The whole band of Merry Men worked well together, and all had good presence on the stage.

The Babes, Tommy and Jane were played well by Jenson Bacon and Caitlin O'Sullivan. Both gave strong performances, and were confident in their roles. They spoke clearly, and delivered their lines well. Jenson's performance of Where Is Love was very good, definitely two to watch in the future.

Overall there were some great musical numbers; I particularly enjoyed Flash Bang Wallop for the finale. I mustn't forget to mention Clarence the Wonder Horse who had a lot of character throughout and helped to save the day.

You had all the comedy elements we expect in pantomime, particularly in the 'It's behind you' scene. However, this could have been enhanced with a little bit of music, and it felt a bit rushed through. There were some nice cameo moments for Ashley Saunders as King Richard and Linda Burgess as the traveller, and it was great that all the chorus members got their moments.

The audience participation song could have done with a little extra work; as an audience we rely on the leading cast members but they were both a little hazy about starting it and the timings!

The band sounded great throughout, competently led by MD James Tovey. The sound and lighting were generally fitting for the show. The singing voices were balanced with the band quite well. The lighting worked nicely, particularly the break up effect for the forest. The set was nice and simple, and worked well to show us the locations. Costumes were lovely and there were plenty of changes for the chorus.

Overall I really enjoyed the production and it was clear that all the cast were enjoying themselves. Great to see such a big group of children involved as well. Congratulations.

Reviewed by Alexandra Berriman.
D8 Rep & Youth Adviser