

Wickham Bishops Drama Club

Little Red Riding Hood

Director: Sue Matten

Musical Director: Thomas Duchan

Performed at Wickham Bishops Village Hall

I was given a warm and friendly welcome to Wickham Bishops hall. There was a great front of house team on duty tonight showing everyone to their seats and selling programmes, a credit to the society.

The show had a lovely opening with the junior chorus of fairies with lots of smiles; then the traditional intro to the Fairy and the baddie - in this case Lupus Reg King of the Wolves. Jack Williams started strong and continued throughout the show. He had a tough job as he had to overcome a full headdress, through which we couldn't see his eyes or mouth for any expressions! He did a good job using his body and voice. Heather Lealan as The Woodland Fairy gave a gentle but superior fairy, with lots of grace. Some of her lines were hard to hear at times, possibly due to speeding through the rhyme but it wasn't helped by the background music being a little loud.

The opening song was bright and upbeat. It was really great to see the range of ages on the stage. Boy Blue played by Linda Burgess and Bo-Peep played by Paige Rowell both had clear voices, and the chorus reacted well to Sir Jasper de Vyle. Ian Lodge did a great job playing the villain, he had good stage presence and played the crooked scheming squire well. He had a strong voice, and was consistent.

Zip a dee doo dah was a well-delivered ensemble number with lots of cheerful faces. Prince Edward was suitably regal even when hiding his royal status from the cast, and despite a rogue sound effect during *This Is The Moment* - Michelle kept going and delivered a good performance overall. The relationship between Prince and Belinda was natural; and they looked good together particularly for the wedding at the end.

The opening of Act 2 was fun and colourful, and the younger chorus seemed to enjoy doing *The Maypole Dance* and although it seemed to stop quite abruptly - they all carried on in a professional manner.

Hustle and Bustle played by Zoe Duddell and Debbie Allen were certainly not the brightest of henchmen to the squire! They clearly had a good rapport and this added to the comedy. Sue Walker developed a good relationship with the audience playing Bobby Shaftoe. She was energetic and natural on the stage.

Grandma Merry was certainly a highlight of the production! Graham Pipe gave a confident performance as granny, with great comic timing and a good presence supported by the fantastic array of costumes! The changing into her nightclothes with the stripper music was great and Graham certainly seemed to enjoy himself!

There were some good songs throughout although the uneasy looks on some faces suggested that some of the cast found them tough. There was a good mix of old and new songs, and you even managed to get a *Frozen* song in there! The band was very good, and the balance of sound was good.

There were a few technical hitches with sound effects firing when they weren't supposed to, or microphones being left on, and lighting cues going before scene changes were complete but overall technically a proficient show. The scene changes were generally very slick, and the set was well painted. The props used were all good and used well.

Overall a fun show, with lots of laughs. The show moved at a good pace, and had a suitable amount of audience participation. The closing number was a lovely way to end and it was clear everyone had enjoyed themselves.