

COMMENTS

SOCIETY:LEEDS CHILDREN'S THEATRE.....

PRODUCTION: TOAD OF TOAD HALL.....

ADJUDICATOR: ...BRYAN CRAVEN.....

LIGHTING:

The lighting was always appropriate for the time & location, varying between bright outdoors and subdued indoors. There was very effective lighting to indicate the "by the river" scenes. Also clever use of shadows created a sinister effect for the weasels song & dance.

All cues were timely and well executed.

COSTUMES:

Costumes were appropriate and simple to indicate each of the different types of animal.

All costumes were clean and well-fitting.

PROPS/SCENERY:

A stunning set, which gave a wonderful 3-D depth to the stage. Some very solid set pieces, including a horse drawn caravan and a boat. I would have expected to see Toad's car !!

The judge's desk was too high, causing Rob to constantly look down on the rest of the cast, which completely hid his face throughout the scene.

The scene changes were in the main quick and efficient, which maintained the pace of the production.

All props were suitable for and added to the production.

HAIR /MAKE UP:

All make-up and hair was appropriate for the production and consistent across all the cast. It was suitable for the levels of lighting provided at the Carriageworks.

Hair and make-up were used effectively to indicate the type of animal, and enhance the costumes.

COMMENTS

SOUND /ORCHESTRA:

The sound effects and additional music suitably enhanced the production, including some original mood music ? All cues were timely and of the right level to balance the cast on stage.

MUSICAL DIRECTION:

Not applicable

PROJECTION:

There were occasions (but not many) when I struggled to hear some of the dialogue, particularly when the action took place upstage.

ACTING:

My main concern with the acting was that, with some exceptions, the cast gave little or no indication that they were portraying animals.

There were some very strong exceptions – Michael Lockwood, as Badger, always maintained badger-like characteristics even when singing and dancing. Similarly, Jane Curtin, as Alfred the Horse, never stopped being a horse, even when not central to the action. And, Sophie Wells, as Chief Weasel, with a very simple positioning of the hands WAS a weasel.

Antonia Elsey gave an accomplished performance as Toad, which would have been enhanced with some toad-like characteristics.

DANCING & CHOREOGRAPHY:

The choreography was simplistic but that's all that was really necessary for the production. Again, some of the moves could have been more animal-like.

SINGING:

Chorus singing was a little lacking in enthusiasm, although it was in tune.

DIRECTION:

A well directed production by Janine, that brought the best out of a young cast.

The director created appropriate moods for the different scenes by the effective use of lighting, costumes and scenery.

The production was well paced, particularly in the second act – the first act was slowed down because of the script, rather than the direction.

OVERALL PRODUCTION/ ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

A great, fun show that was obviously enjoyed by both the adults and children in the audience, which is what a production like this is all about.

A simple FREE programme provided all the essential information.

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SOCIETY: LEEDS CHILDREN'S THEATRE

PRODUCTION: TOAD OF TOAD HALL

ADJUDICATOR: DORINA OVERSON

LIGHTING:

Very pretty lighting for the Opening scene
Appropriately lit thereafter highlighting the
working areas + fading the existing sets
when not needed. Very effective.

COSTUMES:

Good interpretation of all the animals. I particularly
liked Alfred the horse. Toad looked suitably
flamboyant. Ratty's expressed his love of the
river while Mole looking suitably shy +
retiring by contrast, the glasses were a very
nice touch.

PROPS/SCENERY:

Very pretty river bank set. The sky/clouds
gave a very good impression of depth. (I wanted
to stay there longer!) Good to cover Mole + Badger
that way for their entrance. The caravan looked
very much in keeping with the set. The pictures
helped to create the impression of being in a stately
Hall. The jail + courtroom also worked well.

HAIR /MAKE UP:

Nice neat, tidy hair, close to the head to look more like an animal. Badger's make-up was most effective. Toad's could have been deeper. Ratty & Mole were most appropriate. All the animals could be identified by their make-up/costume.

SOUND /ORCHESTRA:

The sound was fine. Nice pre-show & interval music. It's good for children to have the opportunity to hear classical music. (Maybe their only chance - who knows!)

MUSICAL DIRECTION: / DANCING:

Very pleasant music with very pleasing, well performed dances, each portraying the mood the characters were in - very entertaining.

Good interpretation.

PROJECTION:

As usual with Leeds Children's Theatre every-one projected very well. Afraid Antonia's diction was not always clear, especially when she was excited, then she spoke too quickly & too high pitched.

ACTING: Some very good interpretations. I particularly liked Jan Curtin's attention to even minor details in her interpretation of a horse. Michael Hockwood was consistently strong throughout (always remembering his walk) & being patient with Toad although "Too old for all this nonsense!" Mole & Ratty both captured the various characteristics of their different roles. I would have preferred some-one taller & older to play Toad, but she captured the spirit & character of Toad beautifully. Olivia Kirk was very strong in her role as chief weasel, as were Cieran Casey (usher) & Joel Coonlon (policeman). They all show promise & I look forward to seeing them in future productions.

SINGING:

Afraid the singing needed more strength & volume. The voices were lovely but not loud enough. Could hardly hear the Cat.

DIRECTION:

An excellent production which flowed seamlessly from one scene to the next. Good interpretations of the various animals & lovely, appropriate dancing. Every-one obviously enjoyed performing which made it more enjoyable for the audience.

OVERALL PRODUCTION/ ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

A most enjoyable evening. Every-one worked hard at their characterizations - everyone knew their lines/moves. An excellent introduction to the Theatre for children who've never been before. They were all enthralled & quick to pick up on the comedy.

Thank you.

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SOCIETY: LEEDS CHILDREN'S THEATRE
PRODUCTION: TOAD OF TOAD HALL
ADJUDICATOR: EILEEN POSTILL, LGSM, LAMDA (gold medallist)

LIGHTING: Light enabled us to see all features of the scene before us, on the River Bank – tree wings with the Hall and its grounds beyond the River Bank, and levels showed it was summer including a sudden rainstorm. During the play there were variations for winter, Court and Prison, with characters occasionally straying out of light in the Prison Scene. Light pools were effective, and cues were on time.

COSTUMES: These greatly added to all the scenes, were cleverly designed, and enhanced the appearance of the characters. They were nicely maintained and presented. In fact they were a very pleasant collection.

PROPS/SCENERY: There were practical props like clipboards and picnic baskets, token ones like swords, appropriate furniture including the dining table in the hall, and constructions such as the colourful caravan, or the ridiculously high Judge's box, set inset for Badger's and Rat's houses, and pleasant cloths for the River Bank and the Wild Wood.

HAIR/MAKE UP: There was a nice selection of caps, hats, and a wig for the Judge. Detailed attention had been given to make up, particularly for characters like Badger, and this had been had been carefully and artistically applied. All headwear and make up was consistent in standard, and design was good.

SOUND: There was a satisfactory rainstorm and cast noises of wild animals. Accompaniments to songs had been recorded, the Fraser-Simson "Wind in the Willows" tune providing an introduction to the play. Sound levels were satisfactory.

PROJECTION: The children's natural speech patterns had been encouraged, were well projected and sensitively controlled. Badger had intelligently adopted a special voice that he maintained throughout the production.

ACTING: The cast were happy with their characters, and were comfortable with the play. Toad led the way, but she was part of a very intelligent quartet. The cast listened to one another and sang confidently. There was natural movement and dancing to the songs. There were some interesting performances apart from the four leads. I rather liked the Usher, and the Chief Weasel was very light on her feet.

DIRECTION: The Director understood children and allowed them to be themselves within their characters, and she arranged movement and simple dances to suit them. She developed the mood of the play through movement, music, pace and costume, and challenged the cast so that they developed their full potential. They were absolutely ready for performance. Casting, including the horse, was good.

OVERALL PRODUCTION/ENTERTAINMENT VALUE: I was impressed by the Finale, and certainly with the consistent effort shown throughout the production. There was one late song sound cue, but set changes were covered with music. The children in the audience appeared to enjoy the play, but I wasn't sure what they really felt about it, although they applauded nicely. The Show, including the interval, was nicely on time, and the space chosen for performance was the right one. The free Programme was not intended to be posh, but contained all the relevant facts including a designed cover, and cast photographs.

COMMENTS

SOCIETY

Leeds Children's Theatre

PRODUCTION: ...Toad of Toad Hall

ADJUDICATOR: Peter Sandles

LIGHTING:

The lighting created the correct level of mood that was necessary for this production and conveyed a good sense of time and space.

COSTUMES:

I thought the costumes were good , complimenting the setting of the production, and enhancing the characterisation of the players.

PROPS/SCENERY:

Props were in keeping with the production. The set was hired in and worked well, but with one exception, that was of "Rats" House. We saw a depiction of the outside of the house, but the text, action, and furniture was deeming it to be the inside. A little confusing . I was also concerned regarding the court scene. The Judges platform was too high to be climbed up into without a hand rail to the staircase. It sometimes surprises me the inconsistencies in health and safety aspects of sets at the Carridgeworks.

HAIR /MAKE UP:

Hair and makeup was correct and in keeping with the production.

SOUND /ORCHESTRA:

Sound was satisfactory.

PROJECTION:

Overall projection was generally good, but there was a couple of exceptions, most notable was Toad. Volume alone is not the only requirement for good projection, good articulation is a fundamental element. Antonia had poor diction and articulation rendering me unable to distinguish what she was saying.

ACTING:

Generally the acting was of a good standard with the performances of Rat and Badger standing out with their very good characterisation and body language and movement quality . both displayed very good timing of delivery. I also thought that Joel Conlon gave a confident and cheeky performance as the Policeman.

SINGING:

The singing was not very strong.

DIRECTION:

Generally good solid workable blocking and direction.

OVERALL PRODUCTION/ ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

An enjoyable production, the audience were engaged with action and characters on stage.