

GREATER MANCHESTER DRAMA FEDERATION
Musicals
FULL LENGTH PLAY FESTIVAL 2012/13

**NORTH MANCHESTER OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC
SOCIETY**

SNOW WHITE

January 29th 2013

Production Highlights: Excellent performances from the Queen and the Dame.
Imaginative staging on a stage with limited facilities.

To think about for the Future: Make sure that all departments are fully ready for
public performance on opening night!

The Production

This production was of an original script by Barry Crossley. I have seen a number of productions written by Barry and I think he is an extremely talented writer of Pantomime. He obviously has a great understanding of the genre. He includes all the tricks that have become traditional in Pantomime over the years but they never feel dated.

There are many subjects and stories being used for Pantomime many traditional and others not quite so. I know having watched television adverts and reading trade press that Snow White is regularly appearing on the professional circuit but I personally am not too sure that Snow White is really one hundred percent a suitable subject for this genre. My personal belief does not detract from Barry's script. It is a very funny script and will entertain the audiences that see it. They will leave your theatre having been extremely well entertained

Direction/Musical Direction/Choreography – Anthony Quimby

Assisted by Barry Crossley & Helena Ferreira

Anthony you certainly took on a mammoth task taking on all three major production roles. Musically I thought that you made some very interesting song choices for inclusion in Pantomime. It was a refreshing change to hear songs that were different to the norm. I thought the combination in the pit produced an excellent sound to accompany the performance.

Visually your work with the general company was good to look at. I thought there were some good patterns made during your chorus work which made them good to look at. Pure dance routines were also good to watch.

I thought that the characters you built with your principal were very interesting. The relationship between Amelia and Helena was nice to watch because it was not too sickly sweet. The strength of Kathryn as Queen never let the audience forget the evil strength that naturally runs through this story. I don't think that personally I would have given two characters such strong vocal connections with the audience. This is only a small point but I would have preferred Muddles to have made a physical connection leaving the vocal to Nurse. The basis of Ramsbottom was in the script but I feel that you should have developed him more by encouraging him to be more over the top. Exaggeration of the speech impediment would have enhanced the character. Muddles and Nurse made a good comedy pairing though I do have issues with Marc's musicality. Barry certainly didn't let you down bringing his experience to the production along with his script.

On the technical side I think that because you couldn't move from the keyboard you couldn't see the problems with the lighting of the production. When you are responsible for every aspect of the performance something has to suffer. I personally think that the job you were asked to do by the Society was too large for one person. Overall however I am of the opinion that you gave your audience a very enjoyable evening.

TECHNICAL

Stage Management – Chris “Titch” Amis

I think that whoever designed the staging for this production got it absolutely right. It was obvious that the venue had very great restrictions and using minimal settings was the best way to deal with the authors demands. It was possible to see the hard work that the stage crew put in to making sure that their department ensured the production ran smoothly. Congratulations must go to these unsung heroes. They perform their vital function with minimal acknowledgment.

Lighting – Martin Taylor

I think I must say that this particular review of lighting for the production must be the most difficult one I have had to write in my time as an adjudicator because I could not believe how unprepared you seemed to be on the opening night of your Society's production.

On a basic level I have to ask why you could not see the dark area which was across the middle of the stage. The area in front of the keyboard was very poorly lit. It was impossible to see clearly the faces of any artiste that had been directed to deliver their song from centre stage. Consistency is a key point in your department when moving lights are used to indicate character. There was a moving light on the

'Mirror' in the first scene where the Mirror spoke but this was the only occasion this happened. My question is why this did not happen in other scenes when this character was working?

There was more than one occasion when the actors had taken their positions on stage in the dark ready to start their scenes. Indeed on one occasion they had waited so long that they started the scene whilst still in blackout. It appeared that it was only the fact that they were speaking that the lights were actually switched on.

The main cloths that were being used were actually gauzes so I could not understand why there were working lights on behind the for the stage crew. There would have been plenty of light falling through the gauze for the crew to work in effectively. On a number of occasions lights were clearly being adjusted while action was taking place on the stage. These lighting changes were clearly not related to the scene being played.

I was seated in the balcony to watch this production and on more than one occasion the spot operated was told to be quiet by members of the audience because of free conversation that was going on between him and I presume the lighting operator.

Sound – Glenn Knight

Glenn I have to say that the sound for this production was absolutely right all night. There were a couple of instances when I struggled to hear what the actors were saying but I think this could be placed at the door of the actor involved. Actors need to realise that they have a responsibility to project no matter how well amplified they think they are. You can only work with what they produce you are not there to do it for them.

Props – Jenny Gordon

Jenny the style of staging for this production was excellent but the use of minimal setting throws a strong spotlight on the properties being used. I didn't make one not throughout the evening about properties not being correct for the production. Congratulations on your contribution to the production.

Wardrobe – Sheila Mills

This production was extremely good on the eye. I realise Sheila that the costumes were hired from The Boyz but every wardrobe mistress has the final say in the overall look of a production.

THE ACTORS

General comment to all principal players.

I always think that thespians are like moths. They have a natural sense about where the light is and move in to it. This production left me a little confused because you all seemed to have lost the sense light. From my seat I could easily see the poorly lit section of the stage immediately in front of the keyboard. While you were working in this area as directed it was not possible to see your faces properly. I appreciate it is difficult to alter set positions for dialogue but I would have expected with the experience you have outlined in the programme you would have moved to the light in your musical numbers.

Snow White – Amelia Faye Cunliffe

You looked picture book perfect for the role Snow White. I thought the relationships that you developed for Snow White with the other principal characters were strong and appropriate. Amelia I thought that your musical contribution to the production was strong from your first entrance. 'Morning Person' was a good vehicle to introduce your character to the audience. Your duet 'Total Eclipse of the Heart' with Helena was for me one of the musical highlights of the evening because I thought that it was a brave choice for Pantomime.

Prince Rupert of Ruritania – Helena Ferreira

Like Amelia as Snow White Helena you looked picture perfect as the Prince. Everyone has their image of what a Principal Boy should look like and you were totally that image. I made a note following your first entrance about your enunciation. It's no good how well you act if your audience cannot hear clearly but I put this down to first night nerves because once you had settled in to the performance you slowed your pace and your dialogue was strong and clear. I enjoyed your duet work with Amelia very much and your solo musical contributions were also extremely enjoyable.

Queen Morgana – Kathryn Quimby

Evil personified! One of the most powerful performances I've seen during this Pantomime season. There was strength in your performance which never reduced from your first entrance to your last. You even kept the edge during the final numbers. Musically you didn't put a foot wrong all evening delivering a number of songs with great vocal strength. You are obviously a very experienced performer and should be congratulated on your development of Morgana thorough out the presentation.

Ramsbottom – George Jones

George visually we knew exactly what your character was supposed to be. There was a definite sense of lavender about your character but unfortunately I did not think that your spoken delivery lived up to the promise of the visual. On quite a

number of occasions I found myself struggling to hear clearly what you were saying. I mentioned earlier in my comments to Glenn that he is only able to work with what the actors produce. I think that you need to be aware that although you may be wearing personal amplification you still have a responsibility to project vocally. I must say though that you appeared to shift in to a different gear when you were delivering your musical contribution 'Star Song' for me was definitely a musical highlight in the evening's performance.

Nurse Nelly – Barry Crossley

Experience! Experience! Experience! It just shone through throughout the evening. I know that you wrote the piece but that doesn't matter true talent always shines through. I'm not going to write any more in relation to your performance I really don't think it's necessary. North Manchester AODS certainly fell on their feet when they agreed to stage this production with you in it.

Muddles - Marc Duffy

Marc I have to say that I enjoyed the character you presented to the audience. Muddles had a very endearing quality to him. You certainly connected with the audience from the moment you made your first entrance. Although the audience were rather thin on the ground on your opening night but you certainly got a good vocal response from them. You worked well with Barry as the Dame I enjoyed your interaction. Musically I have to say however that you really left a lot to be desired. I made a note about your tuning in 'A Spoonful of Sugar' and I think Barry was certainly a friend to you in your duet 'Friendship'. I can't believe that Anthony knowingly let you on stage so insecure in your song. All I can say is acting excellent music needs work.

Forrest Fairy – Jane Leicester

Jane you are obviously an extremely experienced performer and I know that traditionally one expects the Fairy to talk in rhyme. No matter how experienced a performer is many find it difficult making sense of their dialogue when talking in rhyme but there was not a hint in your performance of any trouble with rhyming dialogue. I thought using the Liverpoolian accent added greatly to your character. Your costume was terrific woodland through and through. I wonder though whether the total contrast worked in the finale. You disappeared in to the company. But this is really a small matter that doesn't affect the quality of the performance you gave.

Spik – Mollie Leicester Span – Layla Earnshaw

Mollie and Layla I thought that you presented your audience with a very funny duo as the guards. I thought the running joke of you crashing in to each other was a touch of genius. Vocally your dialogue was very clear. Well done.

Magic Mirror – Stuart Booth

Stuart even though we never physically saw you during the production it was obvious from your vocal delivery that you were an actor with a great deal of experience. Vocal performances without physicality are extremely difficult. The role could have been very disappointing in the hands of a lesser performer.

The Seven Dwarfs

Prof - Darren Lord

Growler – Caitlin Fitton

Sniffy – Amy Hibbert

Jolly – Ashleigh Blissett

Dozy – Lois Ormerod

Blusher – Rachel Woodcock

Snoozer – Natalia Jacques

What a great bunch of young performers the society has. This young group of performers will certainly ensure the future of North Manchester AODS. Every member of the group developed their individual characters very well indeed. Obviously the name of each character gave the performer the clue about what character traits were needed for their performances. They presented them very well indeed not only through the role calls but in their deeper performances. Well done to everyone.

In his forward in the programme your chairman mentions the fact that this is the Society's first production following some traumatic times. I do not know the detail of the trauma but it is good to see that the Society has managed to get itself resurrected. I wish the Society well in its endeavour to restore its reputation as one of the premiere societies in the area.

Brian J Lawson
Adjudicator – Musicals
Greater Manchester Drama Federation
Full Length Festival