

In the last few years that I have been coming to Bramley Parish Theatre Players Pantomime, it has gone from strength to strength. This year's was bigger, brighter and funnier. A lot of the credit for that has to go the driving force behind it, their Director (& so much more), Dean Patrick. Dean's knowledge, enthusiasm and professionalism bring so much to the Society.

The production this year was an adaptation of Beauty and the Beast. Whilst the story line has some similarities the well known characters which we all associate with this story are obviously missing but the director ensured that they combined the well known story and the traditional ethos of a pantomime together to bring us a well polished production. Music was in the capable hands of musical director Andrew Lockwood who supported the cast with there many songs which were all put over tunefully and with obvious enjoyment. The choice of music was good and enabled the chorus and dancers to display their singing and dancing talents well, The Show had a very strong Principal line up and each one fitted seamlessly into the respective roles and interacted well with each other. Every one of them made their own indelible mark on the show We had Katie Evans as a delightful Bell. Bramley avoided the problem of the Prince/Beast transformation by having Djo Fisher as the Prince, who sadly only made brief appearances at the beginning and end of the show - and Michael Rowley as the strong but equally soft hearted BeastBeast. Gary Holmes is my sort of Dame – brash, outlandish, funny and slightly irreverent - and he the audience on his side from his very first entrance. Every Pantomime needs a battle between good and evil and this one didn't disappoint – Emma Smith, as the Enchantress, was suitably nasty (as, I'm sure was Carolynn Dickinson, who played the part at some performances), whilst Laura Kitching was a joy to watch as the delightful Fairy Fleur Delys.

Joe Smith, as Lefou, grows in confidence every year and his interaction with the audience was first class. The pantomime didn't have a traditional Principal Boy, as in the love interest BUT quite cleverly, Dean made Anton (the Gaston character in the film) played by Olivia Lewis look and behave like one. And she did it with thigh-slapping style. Well done.

I enjoyed John Snowden as the bungling and bumbling Professor Phillipe and last but by no means least the characters in the Beast's castle all brought a delightful silliness to their scenes – Brie (Jamie Young), Forchette (Tracy Crowther), Fouet (Indie Stephenson), Culliere (Abbie Rowney), Sel (Sue Law), Poivre (Amanda Don) and the Countess (Nicky Knightley)

Finally, but by no means least, where would Pantomime be without a lively ensemble and this was no exception. Fine supporting performances from you all.

As with all shows, of whatever genre, all the elements have to be in tune with each other and it worked a treat. The scenery, sound and lighting were very effective – I am always amazed what Bramley manage to achieve on their small stage. So, well done to the Stage Manager (Trevor Smith) and his stage crew and set builders, lighting (CS Lighting) and sound (David Battersby and Alfie

Dorian). Costumes were excellent from the “objects” in the castle through to Belle’s beautiful ball gown. All of them a credit to Tracy Crowther and Sue Law.

The whole cast brought a vibrancy and enthusiasm to the pantomime which transmitted to the audience. This made for excellent interaction between cast and audience alike and gave us a happy evening’s night out. Thank you.

Bramley are currently negotiating with Leeds City Council to acquire their premises to maintain it as an asset for the community. I wish you all well in this venture and if I, or NODA, can help in way, just ask !