

Sleeping Beauty Review

IF you thought pantomimes were over for another year, think again. Richings Players' last week played to packed houses in Iver Village Hall with their sparkling production, *Sleeping Beauty*. And with one of the songs being *Love is in the Air*, it couldn't have been more appropriate as Valentine's Day draws near.

Sleeping Beauty: The Panto is a new one on me, and because of that, most welcome. Norman Robbins' script was full of harmless but humorous little jokes, and his characters, under the direction of Adrian Uzzell, were well formed and original.

Set in medieval Entertainia (what a lovely name for a pantomime kingdom), *Sleeping Beauty* has much more to offer than the ballet. Everyone from seven to 80 from Richings Park and Iver must have squeezed onto the stage, playing everything from insects and woodland creatures to 'mature' fairies, whose rendering of *Nobody Loves a Fairy When She's 40*, complete with bent wands, was hilarious.

There was also a lot of hilarity to be gained from Warren Palmer as an excellent Dame Ammonia Goodbody; Linda Bainbridge as the decidedly dizzy Queen Semolina, and as *Tickles the Jester*, Lotte Fletcher-Jonk really let her hair down - with bells on - dancing and singing with lots of expression and energy. Ammonia and *Tickles*' rendering of *Sonny and Cher's I Got You Babe* was another highlight.

Kathryn Pople really lived up to her role as the *Sleeping Beauty*, while Kitty Murdoch, although just 14, gave a very assured performance as Prince Valiant of Euphoria. And as goth fairy Carabosse, Joe Gibbs put a spell on us, her great voice belting out the song *I Put a Spell on You* while her 'mean' acting resulted in lots of hisses and boos.

As comedy duo *Chip and Pin*, Adam Sheridan and Sophie Torrent's gentle humour won them many fans - and 17-year-old Sophie wasn't the only member of her family performing in this production. Her mum, Anne Torrent, head of music at Swakeleys School, Hillingdon, was musical director; her dad Peter, head of music at Desborough School in Maidenhead, played trumpet in the band, alongside her brother, 20-year-old Will, on keyboard and percussion.

The cast's opening song may have been *So Glad You Made It* but, by the end of each show, it was the audiences who were glad they made it.

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