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The Pump House Children & Youth Theatre
SCRIMSHAW

The Pump House Theatre
17 January 2009

Josie Shingles, NODA London District area 10

Firstly congratulations to Karen Rhodes for such creative writing of this piece, what a wonderful imagination she has. Her direction of the large cast was terrific; the cast were all stars in their own right. These characters came to life, nay larger than life, as this exciting story progressed from one adventure to another spanning the globe. I loved the contrast between the rich aristocracy and the pirates too. A story of love, adventure, betrayal, treachery, lust, hate, revenge, forgiveness and uproarious fun. The baddies got their comeuppance, the goodies came out on top and yes love prevailed in the end, what more could we wish for in entertainment. Also acted by such a fine young enthusiastic cast too, I just loved it from start to finish.

Music by Lee Farman, George Wells and Keith Rhodes was also well composed in conjunction with the storyline. Often it seemed almost incidental, linking scenes naturally, so nothing impressed for me until young Pascal sang Ma Mere which was so poignant it had me in tears. Finally my favourite number Shadows of the Past sung magnificently by Diego. This number was pure genius in words and music so a fitting finale. Musically it was well sung throughout thanks to M.D. Lee. The dances by Choreographer Kelly Hardwidge, Jessica Sullivan and Nikki Carter were also very well portrayed with some unusual moves, especially the scenes on the Caribbean Island.

NICK CORRE was great as sea captain Diego. As the pirate with a kind heart his acting was superb fluctuating from brash cocky brigand to a soft hearted gentle soul when he fell in love with Megan. Nick also has a wonderful singing voice so his rendition of Shadows of the Past was perfect. I enjoyed his performance a lot and think he will go far in his theatrical career.

BEN RHODES made a really wonderful Mateo. This dashing cavalier pirate reminded me so much of Johnny Depp (in that well know film) but Ben was even better in the flesh. The cheek of him, the charm, oozing with athletic smouldering masculinity, how could Becky resist. So I was well pleased to see they got together in the end thank goodness. I can see this young man going far in theatre world.

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National Operatic and Dramatic Association

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What a contrast we had with DOMINIC POWELL as Rufus. As baddies come you could not get much badder. This person was evil, lustful, horrid, lecherous and completely nasty. Dominic played this role really over the top which was great so we all hated him. He got a big cheer when killed by Diego in the sword fight and rightly so. In a way Rufus was pure pantomime or melodrama, and very well played indeed.

I could not believe that SEAN LOVELL was only 20. His portrayal of Crow was magnificent. This evil, avaricious, deceitful, dodgy old solicitor made my blood go cold.. When his greed finally got the better of him and he was killed we all breathed a sign of relief and gave another cheer. Visually made up to look similar to Fagin but much nastier than him as there were no redeeming factors whatsoever. Great character acting by Sean.

Megan, as played by SAIORSE BREWER, started out as a poor kitchen maid who became an heiress. Saiorse played this gently at first, being entangled with her rich boss, but became clever and defiant gradually on the sea journey. She was very sweet but still strong minded. The entire adventure changed her demeanour and although true to her first love she did see sense and achieved true happiness in the end. A lovely gentle performance.

In contrast, NIAMH BREWER as Becky, was exceedingly street wise, feisty and confident. I admired her from start to finish as she gave as good as she got, plus more, to everyone. Very down to earth and entirely with it was Becky and you always knew she would come out on top in the end. A fitting mate for the dashing Mateo. Enjoyed watching this talented actress perform a lot.

What a bitch was Mdm Bouchard, well played by ISHA SOMMARIVA. This heartless woman was so nasty to everyone, especially her little boy Pascal, and only happy when conniving and lusting with Rufus. Isha looked like she was enjoying this role, well its always more interesting playing baddies I know. So another big cheer went up when she finally died too. Very well played Isha.

CHRISTOPHER FARMAN was delightful as Pascal. This poor little lad, so hurt by his mother's behaviour, bewildered by what was going on around him, and only happy when befriended by the girls and crew. Christopher acted this very well indeed plus he sung the heartbreaking Ma Mere song beautifully pulling out all the emotion. A sweet but confident performance.

BEN CORRE as the spotty crafty Scratcher was very comic indeed, TOM JORDAN as Maggot was hilarious and reminded me at times of Baldrick in Blackadder, while JONJO BROOKS was equally good as Driftwood with the weird whiskers and facial expressions. This trio worked well together and had excellent timing, also their body language was great too so a lot of comedy was squeezed out of their scenes.

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STEVEN HIBBERD had the difficult role of playing Moses the young mute boy. He was very cruelly treated by everyone until the goodies came along and made life easier. So it was lovely to see his nature blossom with kindness finally and he had a happy ending too. Steven did well with this exacting character.

What can I say about Gabriel, played by BARNEY LITTLE? Well this rich young gentleman first of all took advantage of Megan, and Becky as it transpired, then went off to marry another aristocrat which almost broke Megan's heart. But not quite for she realised his true character and married someone much much nicer who really loved her.

MATT SLOMKA did not have a lot to do as Rafael, apart from the gambling game at the beginning, then getting killed in a knife fight. The fight was realistic and he appeared to be another nasty piece of work as befitting the son of a notorious pirate, so good riddance.

Another one who did not last long was Cpt Jenkins, played by NABIL FREEMAN. This poor man got into a fight with the horrid pirates and had his ear cut off. We did not see much of him after this but his ear did crop up in later scenes, being relevant to Maggot and the cannibals.

Another person who made an impact on me was CHLOE PAMPLIN as Mrs Johnson. As the nosey housekeeper in Gabriel's house she kept a sharp eye on her staff with their goings on. Plus I loved her cheeky looks and facial expressions when she was pretending to be proper but really eavesdropping.

OLIVER SHARMAN did not have much to do as Mr Spittle, the solicitors clerk. He did as he was told and showed people in and out of Crow's office in a sort of cringing sleazy manner, so Oliver did this well in an understated way.

Costumes were gloriously superb with detail, colour and imagination. Also hair and makeup excellent. The Set was wonderfully and cleverly designed to be adaptable so that it easily transformed itself from one scene to another and brilliant the way it changed from rich house to ship etc. The large crew did the changes under covering music quickly so that everything flowed along at a good pace. Very well done all of you. Lighting was fantastically designed and well operated. Props looked good and in period too. Sound and Effects were also excellent. The Programme was quite outstanding in design and I think you should enter this for an award at this years AGM. If you need details please ask me who to send it to.

It was great to meet and have a chat to Karen in the interval, plus I must thank Elisabeth for her warm welcome and hospitality. Thanks also to your committee for inviting me to review this show, which you can see from the above I really enjoy so much. Its always a pleasure to see your array of young talent and the way the great team of young people all pull together so wonderfully, on stage and behind the scenes.

With best wishes Josie

Josie
2.11.09.