

**Group: Woodfield Entertainers**

**Show: Aladdin**

**Venue: Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall**

**Date: 13th May 2022**

**Director: Jenny Gamache**

**Producer: Tanya McArthur**

**Description of the Production**

Aladdin is a popular pantomime that has evolved from a Middle-Eastern folk tale. This production has been adapted for the stage by Alex Jackson.

**The Venue**

The Peace Memorial Hall is just off the main street of Ashtead. It’s an attractive and spacious venue.

**Front of House & Programme**

We had a nice, friendly welcome from Jenny Gamache and FOH. There was an excited buzz amongst the families coming in. Ashtead had been waiting for this show.

The programme listed cast and crew. It was informative and well-illustrated with cast photographs.

**Scenery/Props/Lighting**

The scenery was attractive and used to good effect. Props were well made and smoothly handled.

Lighting was generally good, although one or two people eluded the spotlight.

**Music, Sound & Choreography**

Mel Elgar and her team used recorded music and sound effects. The songs were well chosen and the standard of singing was high. However, the music could be very loud at times and often dominated the singing. You have good singers, so don’t drown them out.

Julie Bickerdike, Jane Seymour and Mel did a fine job of creating and co-ordinating the dances.

**Makeup & Costumes**

Everyone’s makeup looked good, except for Widow Twankey…who looked fabulous.

Costumes were very attractive and appropriate to the scenes and characters.

**The Production**

The villainous Abanaza (Simon Gadd), along with the Su Shi (Cara Turner) and the Genie (Heather

Chatfield) opened up the show and got the audience into the pantomime spirit.

The opening chorus number was *Sleigh Ride*, delivered with bags of enthusiasm. Then Aladdin (Kenny Menet-Hawkins) sang well in his solo number, but was in shadow for much of it (Stage Right).

Tim Waters was ever so funny as Widow Twankey…with great lines and improvisations. And Hong & Kong (Elaine Denny and Amalee Gamache) gave us a very cool rendition of *Men in Black*.

Princess Jasmine (Laura Hillier) and Tu Shy (Mel Schmidt) performed a lovely duet; and then Tracey Townsend entered as the Empress of China, Sing Lo. Giving a very stately and authoritative performance, she also stage-managed the production…that takes some doing.

We enjoyed a wonderfully funny cooking scene with a highly animated Wishee Washee (Neil Edwards) and Widow Twankey ad-libbing like crazy.

*I’m Still Standing* was an exciting finale to ACT I. The well-co-ordinated dancing really revved up the audience.

Aladdin and Princess Jasmine performed *Dreams Can Come True* to open ACT II.

The action continued with high kicks from Fu Fu (Mia Gadd) in *Kung Fu Fighting*, as the heroes

endeavoured to thwart the plans of evil Abanaza.

Princess Jasmine gave us the beautiful *I Love Him but Only on My Own*; then Wishee Washee, performed a great rendition of *Jailhouse Rock*…actually overpowering the music…but then nothing gets in his way !

Widow Twankey was taking prompts and heckling from all directions, Abanaza was finally defeated and the whole ensemble celebrated with *The Best Day of My Life*.

Hong & Kong plus sundry children entertained us with *The Pizza Hut Song*, whilst the rest of the cast and chorus (Alex and Betty Lapham) readied themselves for the well-co-ordinated finale

*Live While We’re Young*.

It was lovely to meet so many of the cast, afterwards. You all have such enthusiasm and it infected the audience. Even the raffle had children bouncing up to get involved.

Jenny Gamache has developed and presented a fine show, ably assisted by a hard-working cast and crew. Multi-tasking seems to be the norm at Woodfield.

Thank you for a lovely evening. We thoroughly enjoyed a pantomime that was well worth waiting for.

Graham Botterill