

**Group: Woodfield Entertainers**

**Show: Pinocchio**

**Date: 14th December 2023**

**Venue: Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall**

**Directors: Kenny Menet-Hawkins, Neil Edwards**

**Music: Elaine Denny, Kenny Menet-Hawkins**

***Pinocchio*** is a fun pantomime scripted by Tom Humphreys and performed by Woodfield Entertainers.

As usual, the sets and props were beautifully designed and painted; and moved efficiently. Scene 1, set in Geppetto’s workshop was particularly well done; and the opening number *Oh What an*

*Atmosphere* showcased the colourful costumes.

The Lighting was always good; and some very nice effects in the Enchanted Forest. The snow machine, for the Mountain Pass, was comical (they always are).

Songs were well chosen and enthusiastically performed. I understand that your sound person kindly took over the role at the last minute, so Sound and Music were *a work in progress*. I really felt for your technician…and for the actors when they didn’t know what was going to hit them. But for the number

*Thunder in the Mountains*, the line “Can you hear it breaking through ?” was just hilarious.

Mia Gadd was a lovely Pinocchio …with a great sense of wonder. She spoke up well, sang strongly and had a killer smile. Think about how Pinocchio would move before/after becoming a real boy…how to make it different and distinct.

Mel Elgar gave a very believable Geppetto with a fine accent and some seriously good characterisation…

and a fabulous moustache ! The puppet scene was well presented and extremely funny.

The Dame was played with great energy and skill by Simon Gadd…kept totally in character…even to

accosting men in the bar, during the interval. Had such a fun duet with Geppetto, *Turn Around*, with nervous grins and glances to the music desk.

Cricket, played by Heather Chatfield, was the Pinocchio’s kindly but ineffectual guardian…outflanked at every turn by the villains Cat & Fox. These two (Jo Knox & Louise Chaplin) were a fine comedy double act. Their dialogues were good, but perhaps a bit more projection to the audience ?

Although Claire Webb had stepped in late to replace the actor playing Stromboli, she gave a very

confident performance, dominating her henchmen and singing *Gipsys, Tramps & Thieves*.

Denise Hillier led the forces of good, as the Blue Fairy. Clear voice and good movement, but please don’t wave that nose around ! Her fairy apprentices, Alison Kiddell, Alex Lapham and Dawn Moriarty saved the day and rescued the rescuers: Cricket, Dame and Geppeto.

All were ably supported by Betty Lapham, Xander Gadd, Neil Edwards, Peter Williams and Kenny Menet-Hawkins. Definitely a lot of multi-tasking going on, onstage and in production.

It’s not been an easy year for Woodfield Entertainers. Kenny and Neil and everyone have worked so hard and done so well to create and present this show. You give a lot of pleasure to your audiences. May you have a relaxing Christmas and a successful 2024.

Graham Botterill