

On the Fringe



An occasional newsletter from the Spring Grove Fringe – February 2014

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Sleeping Beauty

Well darlings, what a triumph!

From the seamless entrance of the three stooges (Sorry: I suppose I mean Special agents) to the foot stamping teenage tantrums of the princess Briar Rose (a prickly character if ever I saw one) and the hapless, nay hopeless, funny fairy man Fixit (Jester Minute, he's still looking for a good joke!) this production was yet another Spring Grove Fringe revelation!



I'm sure you would agree that Sleeping Beauty illustrates an ever present dilemma for modern royal parents: what do you do when you need to marry off your stropky teenage princess to raise a bit of cash? A bit short of the readies? Palace roof need

fixing? Well then: look for the nearest prince (preferably fine, preferably upstanding, but hey, whatever, as long as he's loaded!) Invite him over. Sorted? Er...NO: the princess doesn't want to play ball. All the shouty little minx cares about is hamsters. (Yes, that's what I said, hamsters) What to do? Call in F4U. (Fairies 4You).

Fairies always bring a hint of magic don't they? Our Fairy Godmother (Linda) and her Head Fairy (Suzanne) certainly did. Silver and twinkly, with just the right amount of magic glitter, they brought all that is good and sweet to the party. But then all fairies are gentle and kind, aren't they? Well of course not, silly! There's always one: Guess who? Carbohic, that's who!! (Now to be absolutely fair; she might have been nasty, she did steal her wings AND



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Next production – The Canterbury Tales

A supper evening with a difference! Our Fringe time-machine will take you back to a 14th century banquet, in the bawdy company of Geoffrey Chaucer and his fellow pilgrims.

The pacy adaptation, in rhyming couplets, was done by Mike Poulton for the RSC. The evening will have five of the tales, directed by Jo and Nigel. Chaucer used strong language and sexual references – it goes without saying that we have not removed these, so this production may not be suitable for children.

Friday/Saturday, May 16/17.

Make sure you have registered your interest in taking part – plenty of help needed front of house as well as on the Pilgrims' way – and look out for the opening of the Box Office.

Lords of London

On 12th March, SGF presents an evening with Howard Farmer introducing and showing the film *Lords of London*, starring Ray Winstone. Howard was lucky enough to be given the chance to pitch for the major orchestral underscoring of the film that he wrote and recorded using the latest sophisticated recording techniques at his home studio. The film is not an 'art house' classic and is not your usual SGF fare, marketed at a very different target audience. So, with the Fringe ascending to Shakespeare and Chaucer, this is a chance to experience the opposite side of the entertainment spectrum.

The film was largely shot in Italy and has two well-known Italian popular TV stars too. Howard will be then happy to answer questions about how he used the modern techniques to fit the score to the on screen action, and to share anecdotes about the experience.

He comments, "just to get the opportunity to do this work was a lifetime dream; this is not about judging the film as a film but about the inside score story."

terrify the little ones in the front row, but she was actually a goblin not a fairy, therefore it doesn't count. The characterisation was absolutely brilliant, so I would never have guessed it was you Amanda!



Never has a swash been so thigh-slappingly buckled, as when our brave hero, Prince Valiant (Daisy) swaggered stylishly onto the scene to save the day. Valiant was to sweep Briar Rose into his arms and marry her on the spot. Could this be the answer to the King's (Ross) money troubles? Could the Queen, (in an understated and modest performance by Jonathan) now afford some even more eye-popping underwear?



Mercifully, we were saved from the sight of any more voluminous silk basques and suspenders as our 3 special agents, (Julia, Scott and Gerry) mistook Valiant for a spy (one of many) and chased him away. No Valiant, no Wonga, so what next?

Her finger having been pricked by the wicked fairy's spindle, Princess Briar Rose (Karina) fell fast asleep. This was indeed a welcome and studied contrast to her authentic and very energetic portrayal as a royally spoilt brat. As well as for the hundred-decibel shrieking, (as confirmed by the Noise Abatement Society) she must also be congratulated on the Olympic-standard of snoring, since it produced a total belief that she could not be woken up (except by a true kiss), despite all the attempts of those characters in cameo roles that followed.

Now Uranus is not easily seen, which is why the good doctor Needed a telescope to find it. As ever, Dick (and wig) was very convincing as the slightly mad scientist. I was also particularly impressed by Val and Dizzy Lizzie's two flying hamsters, but a little concerned by the potential danger of suffocation for Boris, as he awaits take off. Despite his crash landing on the floor in mid flight, I must assure readers that no animals (or humans) were harmed in this act.



Other cameos were wonderfully played: In black tie and patrician manner, the Master of Ceremonies, Nick, introduced the acts with the gravitas and aplomb you would, of course, expect of an experienced Spring Grove veteran. The enthusiastic Nice Boys (Julius and Henry) could give 'One Direction' a run for their money any day. I also enjoyed the performance of The Old Boys, (Jonathan, Allan and Adrian) who were a strong vocal team, forcefully reminiscent of the good old days of rock, even if the name of the group was a little unfair to Adrian.

It was a delight to see the light and floaty fairy dancers (Pia, Mia and Felicia,) also doubling later on as little yellow chicks, with Bethany, the Mother Hen, leading the pecking order. Teenage fairies Ariel and Persil's 'bubbly' performance means that their next roles should really be in a TV 'Soap' Well done to Lizzie and Maisie.



Now, throughout the story, holding the plot together, was Fixit the Jester (Laurie). Although his jokes were terrible, (no wonder the king wanted to throw him in the dungeon) we were absolutely stunned later on, to discover that he was not what he seemed!! What a shock! When everything was going wrong and he didn't know what to do, he confessed that he wasn't really a jester at all, he was actually a fairy! (Fairy Nuf?). His wings had been stolen. His wand had been snatched and now the joke was on him! Nobody

loved him and he was a complete failure. It was a convincing, tear jerking performance and the pathos was only relieved when Fairies4U arrived and rescued him. He could wave his wand once more!

The Hollywood ending duly arrived as the Head Fairy and the jester fell in love. As she might have said: I'm just a girl (fairy) standing in front of a boy (fairy) and asking him to love her!

Prince and princess (yes, eventually somebody did manage to kiss her) and Jester and fairy all lived happily ever after. The King got his money and the Queen now goes to M&S for her smalls!

Once again, a triumph darlings!

As always, this production could not have happened without the input of many others unseen: Thanks go to: Jo and Jenny for costumes, Suzanne and Eloise for make-up, Helen and Gavin for the set design and props, Nigel and Howard for lights and sound, Tony and Roger for stage management, Tessa for the box office and Mike and Lynn for running the bar.

Nodland ennoblement most certainly awaits Jacqui, the Director, who not only brought together the whole fairy fantasy, but was also Prompt for the performances. A little fairy told me she certainly had her work cut out with that job!

MASK – Music Arts, Searchlight, Kingston

Last year we raised monies for the RSA Youth Awards for an award to be made in Kingston. The Kingston Youth Support Service won with their entry to create a Christmas production to bolster the confidence of a group of young people who needed support.

Kingston Youth Support Service, part of the local authority, offers a diverse range of opportunities to young people aged 11-25. It prioritises groups who have been identified as having particular needs, for example: young people not in full time education, those who are underachieving or at risk of being involved in crime.

The MASK group is at the heart of the Borough's work with young people aged between 8-19. Youth Worker Gary Weston explained that, with the RSA funding, they decided, in conjunction with the young people and with support from local theatre, dance and arts professionals, to put on a Christmas production, .

There were taster sessions over the summer, at which the young people put together a short



production over the three days. For Louise Pendry of Bounce Theatre, it was, "A fantastic introduction and insight into working with young people who have never really worked on a piece of theatre like this before. Brilliant!"

"Grimm Tales" was produced at the Arthur Cotterell Theatre at Kingston College on December 6th. It was an exciting evening; the result of months of hard work and seamless co-ordination. It was anything but grim! There were lots of laughs and high energy punctuated by spontaneous applause during a great evening. Grimm Tales was a truly inter-generational production that attracted teenagers, parents and grandparents.

In addition to sterling performances that were funny and energetic, the audience was transported from the enormous forest where Hansel and Gretel are lost, to the magical palace where Ashputtel falls in love with a Prince. We watched a sausage dance and giggled as a donkey produced gold.

RSA Youth Awards are designed for young people who want to achieve something new for themselves and their communities. The Awards help to put project ideas involving groups of young people with their supporters into action.

Also in the wings ...

October 3/4 – Spring Grove Fringe in Ireland? – a piece specially written for us by Chris' s wife Imelda.

November 28/29 – **Toad of Toad Hall**. An updated revival of the much acclaimed Spring Grive Fringe favourite.

Charity Donations

One of our charity objects is to raise money for donation to other local or national charities as determined by the trustees. If you have suggestions for local charities, or perhaps ones in which you have a personal interest, please let Jonathan or one of the Committee know.