

On the Fringe



An occasional newsletter from the Spring Grove Fringe – February 2013

Yet another Triumph for Spring Grove Fringe!!!

Spring Grove Fringe, our favourite Kingston upon Thames troupe of thespians, have once again exceeded all expectations with their 2103 pantomime 'Nono'ya Messin About'.

It was a fabulous production beyond even the wonderful imagination of CS Lewis in its array of strange creatures and bizarre happenings, sometimes even not-happenings.



Directed by SGF dynamo, Jenny Robson, with an experienced and assured hand, it encompassed the Chronicles of Narmia and then added its

own special dimensions. Together with the incomparable Nigel Duffin, Jenny improved upon the original script, catching perfectly the nuances of the great work whilst modernising and thus explaining its deep philosophical implications to a new audience.



As the lights went up (they did eventually) we were greeted with a scene of domestic slavery overseen by a terrifying Jo Need with her grimmest face. Relief was provided by Tony Tresigne as the personification of the mad Professor. The inmates were splendidly played by the young rising stars of SGF, Julian Nail deserving special mention here. Young members were also excellent as Trees and the very young snowflakes were vague and adorable.

Our four protagonists, the gorgeous Suzanne Jones as practical Sue, a beautifully watery Karina



Ramnarain as flaky Loo, too-divine-in-shorts David Hamilton as gullible Archie and evergreen (and that included his hair) Allan Lloyd as a precociously fey Julian, all tackled the challenges of appearing youthful in their own brilliant and unexpected ways.



We were privileged to witness a towering performance by Jonathan Nail, never one to miss an opportunity to put on a dress, high heels and make-up, as the White Witch surrounded by her



Spies, the most evil Scott Milligan (as if!), Tony Tresigne and Tom Morrell, and her minders performed by SGF's resident group of thugs, Lynn Charlton, Jacqui Rollason and Julia Becker. Their performances become more gruesome and finely honed with every pantomime but could someone please put them in pretty frocks just once?

Another starring part was Sharon Henriquez as Prompt, a performer whose confidence grows with increasing practice in each production. We definitely needed to see more of Jonathan Rollason and Bethany Birley as the reindeer as only the tops of their hats were visible, a very slight criticism drowned in this critic's overwhelming delight at the production. We also needed to see far more of Adrian Treloar as Mr Numnus who brought much energy to the show and whose exits were enhanced by a very fetching fluffy tail. Laurie South and Nigel Bellwood as Mr and Mrs



Beaver took me back to that other children's classic 'A Wind in the Undergrowth' and many of the audience (ok, the male audience) did indeed agree that two beavers were better than one, although this critic thought it wasteful.

Somewhere along the yellow brick road (sorry, wrong pantomime) a very 'cool' Asbin the Lion, performed by Roger Chown, had washed up on the Californian coast in the Sixties; I must re-read the book to check out that moment of Asbin in the Groove. Splendidly, Roger knew most of his lines which caused much merriment in the audience: Where or How comes the Sun, Roger?



Even after all these amazing performances the star of the show was the set design by Gavin and Helen Dawson which transported to chilly Narnia. The set changes were so slick that no one in the audience noticed at all. Simply amazing! I must also comment on the costumes which were fabulous and possibly the best ever for this merry troupe, beautifully designed by Jo Need, Tina Nail and 'Mill Street Stitch and Bitch'. Sound Director, Howard Farmer, proved invaluable to the atmosphere of the production. It would not have been an SGF pantomime without the tune to 'Congratulations'. In fact the audience found itself constantly surprised by the music and songs, as were the cast.

All in all a most splendid evening and as a fellow critic and sometime thespian commented "I am so pleased I was not in this production as I could never have achieved this standard". I am sure CS Lewis himself would have agreed.

Next production

May 17/18 – A Midsummer Night's Dream.

This promises to be a stylish production, and one to put in your biography! A great comedy, which Sandy and Nigel have slimmed to 90 minutes. Come to the read-through on Wednesday 6th March.

Also in the wings ...

June 29 – jointly with the Nursery School mothers, a fundraiser for St John's. Watch for further details.

October 4/5 – An evening at the musicals.

November 29/30 (new dates) – A supper evening with two plays.

It's curtains for us!

Those who saw or took part in the recent pantomime cannot fail to have seen our stylish new black drape, so elegantly drawn by Jenny and Helen. This will give new opportunities for set design and scene changes. Also installed after the panto, ready for use in future productions, are new black drapes at the sides of the stage, making entrances and exits so much easier – no fighting through the tatters we had before. These were paid for by SGF and installed by Mike Greenaway.

The Hall Committee has also refurbished the main blue stage curtains, which now run much more smoothly. No excuses for 'unprofessional' opening or closing!

Charity Registration

Following the meeting on 10th October, we submitted our application to the Charity Commission. We were asked to supply additional documentation and testimonials, which were considered before Christmas. Our application is approved, subject to the rewording of the second 'object', which refers to our making grants and donations for other charitable purposes. This was approved at the meeting on 20th February.

Therefore, when the revised constitution and minutes of the meeting have been submitted, our registration can go ahead. The Committee feels that this is an important step in giving SGF activities greater 'status'.

Landirani Trust

Following the pantomime, we made a donation of £500 to the Landirani Trust, which supports orphans and vulnerable people in Malawi.