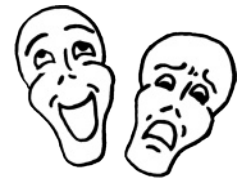


On the Fringe



An occasional newsletter from the Spring Grove Fringe – June 2013

Registered Charity Number 1150982

A Midsummer Night's Dream

It was with more than a little trepidation that I took my seat before the performance began. Was I really going to see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ... and what's more by the Spring Grove Fringe? After all, I mused, they are only amateurs and they usually just do Farndale farces and Pantomime don't they? Are they really going to try Shakespeare? Well, if so, this would certainly be an enormous challenge and a complete departure from the norm. Directed by Nigel and Sandy, this would be hugely ambitious for our local thespians. Could they actually pull it off? As the lights went down, I must admit, I took a deep breath and crossed my fingers.

The play begins in 'Athens', in a richly appointed Court, where a confident opening by Duke Theseus and his coolly regal consort Hippolyta, played by our very own regal couple, Amanda and Roger,



have their wedding preparations loudly interrupted. An indignant Egeus erupts onto the stage, (no mean feat for our venerable thespian, Dick), insisting that the Court enforce Athenian law and compel his defiant daughter Hermia to marry her detested suitor, Demetrius.

Hermia, (played most movingly and heroically by Karina), protests that she will never consent, even unto death, for she loves only the steadfast Lysander whose noble and honourable qualities shine through

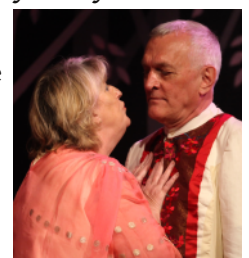


as he stands protectively beside her. It is clear that Hermia loathes her chosen suitor, the inconstant Demetrius, and not simply for his callous rejection of a former lover, her friend, Helena. The two lovers plan to run away, but unknown to them, an anguished Helena spills the beans, thus precipitating the first twist of unintended consequences. Helena is played with spirit by Kate, alongside Lysander, (David) who is the ultimate clean-cut hero, whereas Demetrius (Adrian) moves convincingly from aggressive bombast to a sleaziness of Uriah Heap proportions!



Next follows the first 'turn' or should I say 'turns' The Rude Mechanicals, ably drilled into bumbling submission by their union convener Quince the Carpenter, each portray their character and its mannerisms with closely observed comedic insight. Bottom, the egocentric scene-stealer; Flute with the winsome voice and delicately mincing walk; Snout, whose laugh-out-loud antics as the Wall deliver a notable contrast to the determinedly vacant-faced Moonshine and his companion Snug the lion, whose gentle etiquette means not frightening the ladies. Their first rehearsals in the wood may have owed much to the technique of Laurel and Hardy, (or perhaps to our own dear players!) but their final, triumphant performance at the Duke's Court was most certainly a 'lamentable comedie' and was very funny indeed.

The runaway lovers find themselves lost and weary in the wood, but little do they know that in this beautifully cool and green setting, fairies are abroad. An ethereal Titania, (Sandie K) and unscrupulous Oberon (Ross)



inhabit this sylvan glade, waited upon by delightful young flower nymphs, Olivia, Maddie & Scarlet, and Cameron as a 'changeling child'. Oberon wants the beautiful child for himself but Titania will not concede. Thus begins the weaving of mischievous magic and trickery.

Puck, the fairy messenger, ably played by Linda, must place the juice of a special flower on the sleeping eyes of the runaway lovers. Once awake, they will fall in love with whomsoever they first see. For Titania, it is Bottom, now transformed into an ass, and alas, for Lysander, it is Helena, not Hermia. All is confusion, recrimination and mayhem as the lovers profess undying love for the wrong partners. This tangled web of mischance and mishap provides both merriment and pathos as the magic unravels.



The skilfully rendered music of the guitar linking each scene was a joy and a perfect accompaniment to the rise and fall of the story.

A stunning set design by Gavin Dawson, aided by his faithful apprentice Helen ('I just painted the black bits'), offered a perfect echo of fresh green leaves in shady summer woods. Jo Need, quietly efficient as Philostrate, presiding 'Mistress of the Revels' and organiser supreme of the SGF wardrobe department, created beautiful and imaginative costumes that resonated so well with the atmosphere of midsummer and faerie magic. Stage

management and props by Barbara, Helen and Sandy was smooth and efficient as ever and Fiona, our newest recruit, took on the prompting with quietly professional finesse.



Thanks must also go to Tessa, Mary, Amanda and Jenny for the delicious supper and the Box Office, to Emma for the make up and to Alan and Meryl, Alex, Guy and Jonny on the bar.

Waiting for the performance to begin, I admit it, I had definitely been nervous but at the end I was just elated. Despite all my early doubts; the Spring Grove Fringe had absolutely done it again! All that hard work had handsomely paid off. It was a wonderful, professionally acted and outstanding success. I just loved it!

In (nearly) the words of the Bard himself 'Gentles do not reprehend' ... for this indeed had been Faerie time and a good night unto us all.

*Mrs Reece
Arts Correspondent of the 'Farndale Foghorn'*



Citizens Advice
the charity for your community

Following the production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we made a donation of £750 to the Kingston Citizens Advice Bureau.

Also in the wings ...

October 16 – Annual General Meeting and debrief on Musicals.

November 29/30 – Spring Grove Fringe in Ireland? – a piece specially written for us by Chris' s wife Imelda.

February 7/8 – Toad of Toad Hall – our New Year family show. An updated revival of the much acclaimed favourite.

May 16/17 – Supper evening with a play directed by Jacqui.

Next production

October 4/5 – *An Evening at the Musicals*

Another colourful and exciting show directed by Daisy. Look out for further information about an initial get-together on Wednesday 3rd July.

St John's Fundraiser

The Fund Raiser planned for 29th June has been cancelled. We discovered that Plan B is no more and we felt that we did not have enough material to sustain an entire show. We may plan another for next year but in the meantime, a donation will be made from the Musicals Show in October.

Subscriptions

A reminder that these are due in October and are a modest £20 individual, £30 joint. You need to be a member to take part in productions (other than the pantomime). It is most convenient if you pay subs by standing order, so that our Treasurer does not need to chase you through the enchanted woods!