

Review by Don McKay, NODA Regional Representative District 1

**The Upwood Panto Society: Cinderella**

Directors: Barry Williams & Pauline McLeod

Producer: Doug McLeod

Musical Direction: Doug McLeod & Neville Palmer

Choreography: April Glasby, Jen Hickman, Pauline McLeod

Performed at Upwood Village Hall 7.30 Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012

A very warm welcome from the Front of House Team of Wendy Butson and Lynn Perkins. It was a packed house in this small village hall, with a proscenium arch that was only a bit bigger than some television screens I have seen, and so the spectacle that I was about to witness was completely unexpected.

This production of Cinderella was in the traditional style with all of the elements you would expect. The show started with a brief and confident introduction by Isabel, the Chief Villager played by Charlotte Field, ably assisted by equally confident Chorus. I was a little unsure if a female Buttons played by Jen Hickman was going to work, but Jen absolutely proved me wrong. She did a fantastic job of engaging the audience with her boyish charms and cheeky attitude. Hannah Butson was a lovely Cinderella and sang beautifully. Amy-Marie Field and April Glasby gave good solid performances as Prince Charming and Dandini.

Geoff Dudley and Doug McLeod were hilarious as the Ugly Sisters, Asphyxia and Euthanasia. The four lads, as Situations Vacant, were also very funny. Stuart Jackson and Dee Smith displayed great comic timing as the weak-willed Baron and his malevolent new wife. The comedy duo of Ammer and Tongs were excellently played by Chris Richter and Jill Aylin and Carol Lavender gave a good performance as Major Domo. Beth Westcott and Gabrielle Harris-Clements, were both very good as the Old Lady and the Fairy Godmother.

This was an extremely well directed Pantomime by Barry Williams and Pauline McLeod with some brilliant costumes made by Jean Place, Margaret Carrington, Janet Phillip and Judith Harvey. The Choreography on this small stage, by April Glasby, Jen Hickman and Pauline McLeod, was well considered and performed well by the whole ensemble. The Musical Direction by Doug McLeod and Neville Palmer, who also played keyboards, was an excellent mix of old and new tunes, recognised by both the younger and older members of the very enthusiastic and appreciative audience.

The stars of the show in my opinion, were the extremely talented and dedicated backstage crew of Kym Bannister John Hickman, Maggie Comber, Pauline McLeod and Grant Smith. The sets by Frances Ashfield and friends were beautiful and absolutely ingenious, on such a small stage. The transformation scene at the end of act 1 was truly brilliant, all complemented with sound and light provided by Geoff Carrington and Steve Howes, however there was an issue with the sound of the stage left auditorium speaker which crackled continuously.

A fantastic Pantomime, can't wait till next year's.

*"Congratulations on another superb Panto. We all had a wonderful evening and are constantly amazed at how you do it all in such a small space. What talent there is on our doorstep."* YW Ramsey

*"We all had a wonderful time – we laughed so much our sides are still hurting today!"* JH Bury

*"Thoroughly enjoyed the panto. The best ever? What wonderful talent and not just the actors."* GS Upwood

*"Yet another truly memorable afternoon's entertainment. It was an afternoon of fun and laughter and amazement at the huge array of talent."* JP Upwood