

Group: Starburst
Show: The Snow Queen
Venue: Samuel Cody School
Date: 14 December 2014
Director: Reece Fitzgerald
Choreographer: Liz Woodford
Musical Director: Paul Darrah
Producer: Caroline Robertson, Assistant Producer: Max Topliss



Snow Queen – The Pantomime. This was the first time I'd seen this panto (and the first time Starburst have performed it) and I enjoyed it immensely. The level of energy never dropped and all the cast gave 100 per cent to this polished and fun production.

Front of House: The front of house team were welcoming and helped patrons to find their seats easily. Everything was ready for the production. Music in the auditorium was festive and created a warm atmosphere. The refreshments were varied and efficiently served.

The programme: The programme was of a very high standard, a glossy 20 page, A4 layout and gave clear information and about the production team, cast, crew and forthcoming production. My only minor comment is I would like to have seen the names of the performers underneath their photo, with their biography, as well as their character name.

Scenery/Set/Properties: These were amazing and had been well crafted and were effectively used. The transition between scenes was smooth. The Granny's cottage was charming and the Ice Palace was cleverly constructed with focal point of the Snow Queen's grand throne.

Costume/Hair/Make Up: These were all excellent and in keeping with the characters: The Summer Queen sparkled in her gold, glittering dress and The Snow Queen's ensemble was suitably floaty and frosty.

Lighting and Sound and special effects: These were sensational, especially for the arrival and departure of The Snow Queen. The cast were well supported by the live three piece band and the singing was outstanding; not always the case in panto. The use of the screen for "Let it go" was imaginative and successful.

The production: There were no weak links in this production, the quality of the singing was outstanding and I loved the witty and modern script, such as the Summer Queen being pre-occupied with Facebook. This is certainly a panto for the 21st century. The cast were fully engaged at all times. Libby Brewer as Handy Annie was full of exuberance and Phil Turton as Granny channelled his inner Les Dawson, clearly relishing his role in a series of outrageous and suitably over the top costumes. There was obvious chemistry between Ricky Cale and Curtis Varns as Jack Frost and Snowbell who were always frenetic and cheerful and

delivered their jokes vibrantly and didn't miss any opportunity to engage with the audience. Lynne Main was admirably sinister in the title role and Alex Barron kept the action going as the delightful, ditsy Summer Queen. Hannah Norman gave it her all as the feisty Kai with Amber McLeod suitably sweet as Gerda. There was much to enjoy: the action-packed, hilarious 12 Days of Christmas, the inclusion of the Penguins with a nod to the store which is never knowingly undersold being two highlights.

This show was fast paced and kept most fidgety children engaged during the matinee I saw. The talent of the cast resounded through this excellent production which was executed smoothly and professionally. Well done to all and thank you for inviting me.

A short version of this review will appear on the NODA Website (South East Region) in due course.

**Chris Horton,
District 14 Regional Representative.**