**Group: Starburst**

**Show: Jack and the Beanstalk**

**Venue: The Harlington, Fleet**

**Date: 13 December 2017**

**Directors: Pete Woodford**

**Choreographer: Liz Woodford**

**Musical Director: Paul Darrah**

**Jack and the Beanstalk:**  is set in the land of Merrydale and tells the story of how the wicked Giant wants to eat the King and the villagers. It’s a story with lots of twists and turns, the magic beans, the love story, the slapstick and a sassy fairy sets the scene and appears occasionally to narrate the links in the story.

**Front of House:** The hall was laid out theatre style with raised seating. The front of house team was welcoming and helped patrons to find their seats easily, providing refreshments before the show and in the interval. After the show, the principals were in the foyer, available for photos.

**The programme:**  The programme was of a high standard, colour, 24pages, A4 layout and gave clear information and about the show, cast, support team and a page about NODA and messages from the Director, MD and Choreographer. There were also some lovely colour rehearsal photos.

**Scenery/Set/Properties:**  These were of the highest quality and had been well crafted and were effectively used. The transition between scenes was smooth. The backdrops: castle, town square etc were effective and the scene changes were efficiently executed.

**Costume/Hair/Make Up:** These were amazing and the amount of changes was astonishing. All the costumes were in keeping with their characters. Dame Trot had some vibrant costumes and wigs.

**Lighting and Sound and special effects:**  The lighting was effective and the special effects were fantastic, particularly the echo for the Giant’s voice. The cast were well supported by musicians led by Paul Darrah and the singing was delightful.

**The production:** There was much to enjoy in this pantomime. The talent of the performers was evident throughout and the cast worked well as a team. There were no weak links and the pace never dropped. Everyone had great vitality. There were some spirited performances especially from the characters: Jack, Jill, the King and Queen and Silly and Billy. Daryl Quick as Dame Trot was a pure joy and had a great rapport with the audience (especially a man in the front row!) and Darcy Burgess was suitably nasty as Fleshcreep (the giant’s henchman). The slapstick scene in the dairy was pure magic. It’s all joyful nonsense with lots of laughs for adults as well as the kids. With direction from Pete Woodford and choreography by Liz Woodford, the whole evening was full of high energy and enthusiastic fun ; the result being a show that lived up to the high standard of all Starburst productions.

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

**Chris Horton**

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