**Group: Starburst**

**Show: Cinderella**

**Venue: The Harlington**

**Date: 14 December 2018**

**Director: Reece Fitzgerald**

**Musical Director: Max Topliss**

**Choreographer: Liz Woodford**

“**Cinderella”** by Ben Crocker, one of the traditional pantos, was chosen by Starburst this year. Set in and around Hardup Hall and the Palace, it is classic panto, with Cinderella finding herself at the mercy of her wicked Stepmother and the Ugly Sisters. Then there was Buttons, the audience’s friend, Dandini and not forgetting the Fairy Godmother and Prince Charming. And of course we had the community singing in the form of “Baby Shark”. We also had a soaking (with cold water!) and sweets thrown in the auditorium.

**Scenery/Set/Properties:**  The sets were brilliant and there was imaginative use of Audio visual to narrate the story and keep us updated. The props were good and well used by the cast. The gorgeous coach deserves special mention as do the horse’s heads used in the transformation scene. These were magnificent and of the highest quality.

**Front of House:** The hall was laid out theatre style with tiered seating. The Front of House staff were welcoming, showing patrons to their seats. There were refreshments, a raffle and light sticks for sale all adding to the atmosphere for the show.

**The programme** was A4, colour, glossy and of superior quality. There were messages from the Director, MD and Choreographer as well as the support team. It contained all the necessary information about the cast, crew, charity and had some nice touches including “Crew Spotlight” and results of a recent competition. There was also a page dedicated to NODA.

**Costume/Hair/Make Up:**  The fabulous costumes were first class, colourful and fitted well. There was good attention to detail in ensuring each character was appropriately dressed. A lot of thought had gone into the use of costume and hair to emphasise the personalities of the characters, especially the Ugly Sisters, Beryl and Cheryl as well as Snitch and Snatch. The transformation of Cinderella from her rags into her ball gown was a master stroke.

**Lighting, sound and special effects:**  The lighting was well controlled and effective. The sound, initially seemed a little out of balance which made it distorted, but this was addressed in the interval. The singing was excellent with the voices blending well with the live music under the Direction of Max Topliss.

**The production:** From the richly coloured storybook opening to the inevitable wedding at the end, this show was a delight from start to finish. Director Reece Fitzgerald had well drilled his company in this lavish production. Buttons was smart and lovable. The Ugly Sisters played off each other effectively and Cinderella was as sweet and charming as she should be. The Prince was suave and Dandini was naturally engaging as was the Fairy Godmother. The wicked Stepmother had charisma and great stage presence. Snitch and Snatch brought some comic mayhem to proceedings and I loved the slapstick. It was good to see actual mess and not mimed chaos! There was a sprinkling of local and topical references. The dancers had been well schooled by Liz Woodford and her experience was evident in the imaginative and first class numbers. The whole show was stunning and breath-taking in equal parts. This was the first visit to Starburst for my companion and she was amazed at the level of professionalism. Starburst go from strength to strength providing excellent entertainment and all in aid of such a brilliant and worthwhile cause.

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

**Chris Horton**

**District 14 Regional Representative NODA SOUTH EAST**