**Group: Starburst**

**Show: Rapunzel**

**Venue: Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College**

**Date: 13 December 2015**

**Director: Ricky Cale**

**Choreographer: Liz Woodford**

**Musical Director: Zoe Hardy**

**Producers: Max Topliss and Hannah Norman**

**Rapunzel - The Pantomime** is set in Pantoland and tells the story of how wicked Gothel raises Rapunzel as her own. Rapunzel, with her magic hair, is banished to the tower. Its a complicated story with lots of twists and turns. A sassy fairy sets the scene (with giant storybook) and appears occasionally to narrate the links in the story.

**Front of House:** The hall was laid out in theatre style with central aisle and raised seating. The front of house team were welcoming and helped patrons to find their seats easily. Music in the auditorium was festive and created a warm atmosphere.

**The programme:**  The programme was of a very high standard, a glossy, colour, 16 page, A4 layout and gave clear information and about the production team, cast, crew and had some lovely rehearsal photos. There was also information about the “Starbursts Children’s Charity”.

**Scenery/Set/Properties:**  These were amazing and had been well crafted and were effectively used. The transition between scenes was smooth. Rapunzel’s tower was impressive and cleverly constructed. The backdrops: woods, town square etc were effective and the scene changes were efficiently executed.

**Costume/Hair/Make Up:** These were high quality. I particularly liked Queen Rosita’s orange ensemble with just a hint of Dame Edna Everage. It made a refreshing change from the traditional buxom and bustle look usually seen on the dame. All the costumes were in keeping with their characters. The vibrant costumes of Jenny and Jangles are worth special mention.

**Lighting and Sound and special effects:**  The lighting was effective and the special effects were fantastic. The cast were well supported by the live four piece band and the singing was outstanding.

**The production:** With incredible choreography thanks to Liz Woodford and rotating scenery there was much to enjoy in this pantomime. The talent of the performers was evident throughout. The cast were strong and all the principals had great vitality. There were some spirited performances especially from the characters Jenny and Jangles. Lynne Main as Jenny particularly had great rapport with the audience and her attempts to be the focus of the show and attract Prince Flynn were hilarious. Izzy Stephenson was charming as Rapunzel and with Adam Cook as Prince Flynn they made a charming pair. Alex Barron as Jasper gave us plenty of laughs and Vicki Aoyade was suitably sassy as the Fairy. And because its 2015 there was a moral message about eating fruit and veg and rejecting sweets, pastries and cakes. Safe use of the Internet also gets a mention as does Dr Who, the Ipad and Screenshot. But it’s all joyful nonsense with the humour on two levels so lots of laughs for adults as well as the kids. With debut direction from, Ricky Cale and producers Max Topliss and Hannah Norman, Starburst have hit on a winning formula - high energy and enthusiastic fun - with this panto and should be proud to add this show to their list of successes.

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**

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