

Trafalgar Theatre Group's variation of 'Little Red Riding Hood': Classic to Comedy

Most people are familiar with the classic tale 'Little Red Riding Hood', complete with big bad granny-eating wolf, deep dark forest and a smidgen of make-believe to boot. However, when it comes to the wonderful world of pantomime, that familiarity can change, sometimes drastically, often veering far off the beaten track. Such was the case with the recent panto production by the Trafalgar Theatre Group at Inces Hall. Directed by Margaret Seed, the group's interpretation of 'Little Red Riding Hood' took artistic license to its limits, much to the glee of an audience tickled to tears of hilarity, proving that sticking to the plot doesn't necessarily bring optimal results.

The story, set in the land of Pantovia, revolves around Prince Rupert who, after a period of exile, returns to find his position all but usurped by the aptly named Count de Cash, who is hell-bent on not only achieving domination but also battling it out with the Prince for the hand of the innocent Rosie. The plot unfolds with Rosie's comically frightful relatives, the Rumples, staggering through various stages of family life and love, much to the delight of the audience, with a nasty werewolf stalking around topping off the action nicely. The whole performance was masterfully executed with the mix of typical panto role-reversal, slapstick comedy and audience interaction finished off wonderfully with some local references that kept everyone entranced from start to finish.

Prince Rupert, one of the main characters, was played by Sylvana Felice, a new face on the Gibraltar stage. Sylvana performed with enthusiasm and injected a sense of personality into her role, as was demonstrated in many of the scenes involving baddie de Cash and Rosie. The Prince's faithful butler Sternum was an excellent character whose dry, stiff manner was played effectively by Julian Lyne Pirkis.

Elaine Dalton took the reins as lead character Rosie in a last minute change of cast due to illness, a role she played with great vigour. She must be praised for such a committed performance at short notice. Rosie's family packed a solid comedic punch, especially Granny Grabbit, performed by Lindsay Jennings, who wobbled her way through the show with the aid of her trusty duo of Zimmer frame and gin. Rosie's brother Reggie, played by Julian Felice, was an audience favourite with his lovable naughtiness and daft antics, while the mother of the siblings, Roxie, acted out marvellously by familiar face Frankie Hatton, added a good slosh of hilarity with her garish dress-sense and crude personality.

Count de Cash, the big baddie of the story, was performed by Tim Seed, who injected the perfect mix of smugness and superiority into the role, especially when lashing out at his two bumbling sidekicks, played by Joe Neary and Andrew Dork, whose on-stage relationship was thoroughly enjoyed by a giggling audience.

The overall performance had many still laughing as they exited the hall and will no doubt be talked about for months to come, a compliment to the hard work and

dedication that was put into such a well-constructed, balanced variation of an old classic.

Sarah McIver