

Dick Whittington

For Henfield Theatre Company's "Dick Whittington" co-directors Angela Reid and Deborah Fields uproariously fulfilled their promise of family pantomime, from the rousing opening number "London is London" to the farewell encore of "Reach". The sympathetic piano of Musical Director, David Barnett, keyboards of Jane Haines and Christ Walker, the bass of Dave Edwards and Roger Cook on drums supported excellent singing throughout and there was audience participation galore, including an hilarious dough slinging episode with missiles flying too and from the audience. From the very young, starring as rats, mysterious woodland creatures and villagers through to experienced veterans, all were confidently in character, beautifully dressed and enjoying themselves.

No opportunity was lost for comic timing and asides - thigh-slapping Dick Whittington (Jess Cina) and his sweetheart, Alice (Simi Fyles) sang of their love with sweet musicality and Tommy the Cat (Pom Baragwanath) proved a deliciously self-contained feline. Dramatic explosions announced Witch (a scary Lynette Rose) and Good Fairy (Darcie Thompson-Fields) whilst Dame Sarah (Geoff Pratt) with Hither (Nick Roughton), Dither (Kevin Locke) and Nicholas (John Pursglove) provided laugh-a-minute slapstick and banter.

Paul Woodcock played Alderman Fitzwarren in London and the Sultan in Morocco with great authority, whilst old sea salt, Chris Whitehead as the Captain cracked awful puns, sang and courted Sarah with abandon.

A tremendous storm and shipwreck with tilting decks and hilarious flashbacks to "Titanic" changed the scene from rainy London to sun-kissed Morocco and introduced another star – Humpy the Camel (Gary and Helen Fyles). Tommy the Cat soon set about ending the plague of rats; the glamorous Humpy disposed of the witch and evil spells removed, Dick returns triumphant to his destiny as Lord Mayor of London.

The glittering, wedding scene Finale with "All I want for Christmas" sent a satisfied audience home full of smiles.

Maddy Woods