

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

The set on this production was absolutely beautiful with a small revolve to stage left opening up to Ebenezer's office and later his bedroom. The set was snow covered and with the extension further back now had 6 entrances and exits which worked fantastically with this large cast.

The costumes were lovely and the lighting added to the mood to create a Victorian era. The props were fabulous and very in keeping with the time. I loved the choice of songs and as there were quite a number that these were shortened versions. The musical chosen and taught was really varied from "Carol of the Bells" to "I Wish it could be Christmas Everyday". The songs chosen suited the vocals of those singing and as there were some wonderful harmonies in many of the numbers.

The direction by Prab Singh (ably assisted by Jonny Molyneux) was slick and fast paced making sure the action kept moving. The casting was great with a number of the younger performers stepping up a gear. The choreography by Katie Gough was creative and covered a wide gamut of genres and abilities.

The cast were fabulous and although I can't obviously mention everyone each member created characters that were believable and everyone was enjoying their time in the limelight.

Gareth Maudsley was brilliant as Ebenezer Scrooge. To play an old man at his age is an accomplishment in itself but to perform it so believably with great mannerisms and clear diction was very watchable. Well done Gareth. Solomon Asante-Owusu was a super Bob Cratchit opposite Tillie Evans as Mrs Cratchit. It's hard to play parents when you're as young as these two but there were some nice touches to their characterisations. Tiny Tim was cutely played by Lola- Rose Potts with a nice delivery of lines.

Fred Scrooge/Young Scrooge was delivered really well by Harry Gardner who is growing in stage presence every time I see him. Nice clear dialogue and vocals on songs. Jade Hamer played both the Ghost of Jacob Marley and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come and both were fabulous despite one being non speaking! Great characterisation on both and delivery of each character Jade. Poppy Evans was a lovely playful Ghost of Christmas Past with super delivery of dialogue and stage presence. Toyin Lawal played The Ghost of Christmas Present extremely well with nice gestures and great timing.

Every song was delivered with great vocals especially the songs with harmonies such as Carol of the Bells which is one of my favourite Christmas songs. A Thousand Years and Say Something fitted the story brilliantly and were delivered beautifully. This was a lovely start to the Christmas period and I look forward to seeing you all on my next visit.

By Sharon Drummond