

The Chameleons Amateur Dramatic Society
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
13th January 2007
The Paul Daisley Hall, Brent Town Hall
Harvey Kesselman

A packed, noisy house greeted this latest pantomime from this talented company. Written by two members of the company, **Helen** and **Rachel Stevens**, this was a traditional pantomime without double entendres, a truly family entertainment. With a cast of 45, including a number of children, who were all well drilled, although it has to be said that more attention should have been paid to their stockings 90% of which were very 'baggy' – although I did notice an improvement in the second act. As there were 19 named parts (including the Dwarfs), this report could run to many pages, so I hope I will be forgiven if my thoughts on these principals is not too long.

Once the lively overture started, the audience (lots of children) quietened down and the orchestra, under the firm guidance of **Ricardo Gonzales** made an impressive sound throughout the evening. There was the occasional problem with the music overpowering the singers, in spite of them being miked - perhaps more attention should have been made to projection and not having to just rely upon having personal mikes. It was certainly a good idea to have two characters set the scene in the guise of the Brothers Grimm. **Ginge Anderson** (Jacob) and **Alex Forni** (Wilhelm) did a splendid job by getting the audience participating right from the beginning. Their positioning on the left side of the proscenium with all their props could have been distracting, but it worked very well and did not interfere with the action on stage. Their intro to each scene and the use of that BIG book was good, although I wonder whether the audience at the back of the theatre could see what was written and drawn on the pages. **Arlette Kamellard** was a very sympathetic Queen Magnolia, and her solo was delightfully sung. Her appearance as the 'ghost' in the mirror, who turned out to be the late mother of Snow White, was a nice touch. **Donna Dempsey** was a charming Princess Snow White, her acting was lovely and she kept well in character throughout. **Les Elliot** as King Ivory gave a good performance and his rendition of 'I'm getting married...' was well in character and his confusion when 'under the influence' amusing. **Helen Downer** as The Palace Butler acquitted herself well, joining in the company numbers with enthusiasm. **Michelle Edwards** made a 'dashing' Prince, slapping her/his thighs, behaving as all principal boys should behave, winning the Princess in spite of the machinations of Lady Chartreuse, wickedly played by **Hannah Bain**. This was a truly evil performance by Hannah who made a wonderful villain. Her two henchmen, **Helen Stevens** (Bother) and **Geoffrey Coad** (Blast), were suitably confused and wonderfully stupid. **Jeremy Spolander**

was suitable as The King's Woodcutter who, after waking from the spell, refused to decapitate Snow White. **Stephen Smails** gave an excellent and funny cameo performance as The Vicar. The Dwarfs, headed by **Janette Hutchinson** were excellent, and the various coffee names they had been given were a splendid idea. They are worth mentioning by name: Janette was Percolator; **Laila Forrester**, Cappuccino; **Niall Brennan**, Latte; **Danielle White**, Espresso; **Sinead Lay**, Frappuccino and **Kristian Mendola** was Café Au Lait. However, although not shown in the Cast List, there should have been a seventh Dwarf mentioned. According to the photograph of All the Dwarfs in the programme, **Niall O'Mara** should have been listed as Mocha.

So far, I have mentioned all the named characters bar one! As in all good pantomimes, the one character that should stand out, and the one the audience loves to see and hear is The Dame. In **David Murphy**, (Dame Bella Du Balle), Chameleons had one of the best Dames I have seen in any of their pantomimes. He was absolutely splendid. His rapport with the audience was wonderful, his acting deliciously OTT. A most enjoyable performance.

As I have already mentioned, the orchestral playing was first class although they were a little loud and rather drowned the words of the songs sung by both chorus and principals. The costumes were excellent; the Dame's costumes were rightly outrageous. The sets (Stage Productions) were wonderful and imaginative. As well as playing the villain, **Hannah Bain** was also responsible, assisted by **Michelle Edwards** for the choreography; Stage Manager **Darren Longman** and his crew made certain all ran smoothly; **Chris Davis** designed the lighting helped by the lighting crew; sound design – **Alan Foss**. There were many other people whose help made this a very successful show, and I am sure they won't mind if I don't mention them all by name **Robert Spolander** as both Director and Production Manager, is to be truly congratulated on directing a very good show with all the right ingredients that made it the great success it was. **Helen** and **Rachel Stevens** also deserve great praise for writing such a fun filled show.

