

DISNEY DOUBLE BILL – ALADDIN & JUNGLE BOOK

Let's start with Jungle Book – From the very first moment we saw the set, we were hooked – all those jungle trees looking so elegant and moving so gracefully set the scene beautifully. When the principals and chorus arrived, all the words could be heard, both dialogue and singing and the sound system used for the accompaniment was set at just the right level.

Lovely work from all the principals – Max Mason as Mowgli was a delight with great performances from Baloo (Max Jorquera), Bagheera (Jimmy Daniel), Coconut Tree (Zoe Holmes), Colonel Hathi (Oliver Smith), Shere Khan (Bertie Beeching), King Louie (Patrick Stewart) and Boss Monkey (Harry Woodhouse). They all coped admirably with their costumes and one or two of the animals were so terrifying in look and action that some of the younger members of the audience were audibly frightened!

The Elephants, the Jungle Creatures and King Louie's Crew all looked absolutely right and helped to tell the story with their delightful singing and movement.

On to Aladdin Jr - This was full of Eastern promise and the promise was fulfilled! The costumes were wonderful and they alone transported us to the East immediately. The well known story was told by a very attractive team of Narrators who worked well together – they were: Zoe Holmes, Natalie Harper, Cat Houston, Fiorella Amicucci-Rose and Tahys Rodriguez.

Max Jorquera changed out of his Baloo bear suit to give a super performance as Aladdin – this talented young man sang and tumbled his way into the heart of Princess Jasmine played by Camilla Savill-Lawes who gave us an elegant Princess with a lovely voice.

What can I say about the Genie!? Robyn Nash was all over the place and looked amazing – what a character! And talking about characters, what about Charlie Woodhouse as Iago? A really loud mouthed parrot who was charming all the same and acted just like a very naughty parrot. Bertie Beeching was the Sultan and Oliver Smith was Jafar with Tom Page as Razoul – all using their acting skills to make these characters come alive. There were a lot of other smaller parts and they, together with the chorus added much to the storyline. There were also some amazing effects, including the magic carpet.

Director and Choreographer Sarah Dormady must be very thrilled that all her hard work resulted in two such excellent shows and all those working backstage are to be congratulated as well in whatever role – programme, stage management, costumes, makeup and not forgetting the chaperones. Thanks to everyone.

Brenda Gower Regional NODA Representative