



Cornwall**Drama**Association

a service to amateur drama in Cornwall

President **Richard Poulter** Patrons **Robert Duncan** and **Simon Williams**

THEATRE FESTIVAL PLAYS SECTION

Report for "On The Wild Side" seen by Margaret Cortis and Coral Pepper on Friday 22nd March, 2013.

THE SHOW. This was an "all singing, all dancing" Cabaret, packed with 46 musical items which moved at a terrific pace from the moment the curtains opened. The show was divided into four sections with appropriate scenery for each. The evening provided a vehicle to show-off the musical and dancing talents of the Company and the capacity audience were enthusiastic in their appreciation.

STAGE PRESENTATION.

The first section was entitled "Wild Space" and the beautifully-painted flats and back-cloth depicted the inside of a space ship with glimpses of the universe through the round windows. The "Pigs in Space" running gag fitted in well to this section.

"Wild Jungle" had a brightly-painted jungle with trees, animals and a fearsome snake setting the scene for this section.

The third section was "Wild West" with the back-cloth showing us a bar with bottles, buffalo head, guns etc. and the side panels painted (or wall-papered?) in a spectacular black and gold design appropriate for the inside of a Wild West Saloon.

The "Wild Child" scenery was a complete contrast depicting a true "urban jungle" scene with buildings and streets.

The scenery for all sections had been thought-out carefully and depicted each section perfectly. Congratulations to the scenic artists who did a splendid job.

LIGHTING AND SOUND.

The lighting-effect at the start of the Show was spectacular and there were some very good effects incorporating the LED bar and subtle fading to match the mood of some of the numbers. The lighting throughout was well-handled with just the odd dark spot. The singing came over well, particularly in the chorus numbers which were well-balanced. There did seem to be a problem with some of the face microphones, particularly in "Pigs in Space" and for some of the soloists, which was a pity because we did lose some of the lines.

STAGE DIRECTION

The large cast had been drilled to perfection with all entrances and exits being carried out quickly and without any hold-ups which was amazing considering the number of people who had to be manoeuvred on and off the stage. The “Pigs in Space” console was handled very well and looked right with its various levers etc. We were impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the company who threw themselves into every number and were word-perfect which was a delight to see – even the smallest members of the cast were fully aware of what was expected of them and were one of the highlights of the evening. There was excellent stillness, when required and everyone was concentrating on what was happening around them. There were some good characterisations in the numbers which brought the songs to life.

The pace of the evening was excellent and did not flag for one moment – we felt that this must be the fittest Company in Cornwall but it would have been nice to see a few more smiles – we were all enjoying the show but, at times, there were some very glum faces on stage. Don’t forget, the audience wants to see that the performers are enjoying themselves.

COSTUMES

We were treated to a superb selection of costumes and it was a pleasure to see the attention to details with uniform tights and black shoes for the ladies. The silver outfits for the “Wild Space” were great and we loved the head-dresses. The “Pigs in Space” trio looked great, especially Miss Piggy with her luxurious wig. The “Star Wars” costumes were great, especially Darth Vader and the yellow dress. The leopard-print costumes were appropriate for the Jungle Scene and the colourful Saloon Girl outfits were amazing as were the bright waistcoats for the cowboys. The Sheriff looked right in his black frock-coat and hat, also, the girls’ wigs finished-off their outfits a treat and looked just right. The animal costumes for the youngsters were outstanding, particularly the elephants and the crocodiles which were super. The gorilla looked very lifelike. The more modern grey outfits for the ‘Wild Child’ section were a great contrast and appropriate for this section. There were some very quick changes of costume which were carried out without delay. The costume department are to be congratulated for all their hard work, everyone looked wonderful and what a body of work it must have been with such a large cast.

MAKE-UP

Appropriate for the size of the hall and the lighting. Nice to see the children not overdone.

MUSICAL DIRECTION

The music was recorded and the Company are to be congratulated for being bang on cue and having excellent timing in each number. The volume was well-balanced throughout and never overpowered the singers. We have gone through each section

noting some of the outstanding numbers separately, although it was hard to choose from such a selection.

CHOREOGRAPHY

We were treated to some excellent dance routines, set by several talented choreographers, all of which were within the capability of the performers. There were some interesting ensemble groupings and good use of the stage. The youngsters moved with confidence and really looked as if they were enjoying themselves. The routines were well-rehearsed and, although occasionally a little repetitive, matched each section. We enjoyed the ballet which was a good contrast to the quicker numbers and the hand movements to "Reach for the Stars" were excellent. The energetic dancing in the final section, together with the 'rap' numbers was terrific, particularly "Heartache Tonight", "Quatro" and "Flo Rida".

SECTION 1 – WILD SPACE.

A bright opening which really did go with a bang. "Kidz" and "I don't want to live on the Moon" were well-performed by the children. "Everyone' Gone to the Moon" was a good choice for this young lady and "Fly me to the Moon" was outstanding from this talented young performer who 'sold' it to the audience with great panache! "Rule the World" was well-sung and the ballet sequence made good use of the stage. "Blue Moon" was another good choice and performed well. "Reach for the Stars" was terrific with well-rehearsed hand and body movement. We enjoyed all the ensemble numbers and could hear every word.

SECTION 2 – WILD JUNGLE.

"She's a Cougar" was outstanding with the chorus really going for it and a good performance from Jane. "I'm an Ape Man" was fun and "Crocodile Rock" had excellent movement. "Bare Necessities" was a winner with good singing and wonderful rapport with the youngster. We enjoyed "Funky Gibbon" and "Never Smile at a Crocodile" was a delightful number for the children. The singing in "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" was excellent, with a super Lion who did a splendid job although some of the action on the floor couldn't be seen from the back of the Hall. "Talk to the Animals" was a real winner with excellent singing and very interesting signing, which worked extremely well. "Tiger Feet" brought this section and the first half to a rousing finish.

SECTION 3 – WILD WEST.

"The Gambler" was very well-sung with energetic dancing and the Saloon Girls performed "Next to Me" in character with interesting movement. We had good solo and audience participation in "Wild Rover" and the "Bacon Song" from Pigs in Space was very funny. Excellent "I shot the Sheriff" with this performer interpreting the number extremely well. "Cigarettes and Whiskey" was a rousing ensemble number, spoiled only by microphone problems. "Desperado" was a poignant number, very well acted and sung, also a nice contrast. We enjoyed "Bad Moon Rising" which suited the soloists' voices well.

This section really gave the younger members of the cast a chance to show-off their dancing talents with energetic, modern 'rap' numbers and 'funky' movement. We had a rousing opening with "Heartache Tonight" and it was nice to hear some harmony in "Wild One (Rydell)" with a lively dance routine. "Wild World" was a well-performed number and we felt the emotion. We enjoyed the old favourite "Avenues and Alleyways" which went with a swing and there was good stillness from the chorus in "We are Young." We enjoyed the ensemble number which were all performed with verve and energy. The finale was excellent and the "Back in the Old Routine" gave us a fitting rousing finale to the evening.

There is no doubting the endeavour of your Company, the audience was enthralled from the moment the curtains opening. No time was lost in scenery or costume changes and there was tremendous energy throughout the show which never flagged. Congratulations to the Director for integrating the very young and the 'not so young' into an enjoyable and memorable evening.

M. Lantz