



Wendy Jones

currently PRINCIPAL BOY in *Mother Goose* at Embassy Theatre, Peterborough.

A Happy New Year To All

Now fully booked to March 27th

All enquiries to: 22 Link Lane, Wallington, Surrey
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CHRISTMAS SHOWS

Continued

the happiest way.
Nita Valerie is sometimes a kind of Fairy Z-car policewoman, directed by a walky-talky, and at other times, she is a former Huddersfield pantos, Annie Awful—bringing infectious gusto to all that she does.

With these two so much in control the dame has not as much to do as usual, but Jimmy Slater adds the conventional humours of the dame, with Billy Merrick the bad baron as her partner. Helping in the general run of the fun are Al Paige and Monty Bond with a versatile combination of slap stick and musical offerings. Jimmy Malborn adds a valuable support.

Lynn Valentine sings attractively as Robin Hood, and Mara Laine a vivacious partner as principal girl. The two Babes are played with charming naturalness by Jill Huskisson and Antonia Moss.

'BABES IN THE WOOD'

Pantomime devised and written by Nita Valerie, directed at the New, Huddersfield. Presented by Nita Valerie.

Company includes: Tabby Benner, Linda Dunn, Nita Valerie, George Malpas, Billy Merrick, Jimmy Slater, Hugh Kesley, Mara Laine, Lynn Valentine, Roy Barracough, Jill Huskisson, Antonia Moss, Jimmy Malborn, Monty Bond, Al Paige, Hylda Baker, Mervyn Rolando, Robin Taylor and Douglas Austin, Karen Lindsey, Amanda Butterby and Shirley Vaughan, Audrey Spencer's Young Ladies, Audrey Spencer's Babes and Tabby Benner Girls.

HULL

'ALADDIN'
HELEN SHAPIRO, threatened for a day or so by throat trouble, proved there was nothing wrong with her larynx when

"Aladdin" opened at the New, Hull on Boxing Day.
She makes a charming principal boy, and Barbara Jackson sings like a thrush as principal girl, but it is of course Charles Mylne, the wicked magician, Chris Sheen, Widow Twankey and Gerald Cowan, Wishee-Washee, who steal the show for many children.

And for the children, too, it is wonderful with coloured lights, gorgeous dresses, splendid scenery



Helen Shapiro in "Aladdin" at the New, Hull.

and swiftly-packed slapstick. For father there are some extremely pretty girls to watch even if they do dance a trifle woodenly.

A circus group, the Wlaits, provide some neat fooling. Music comes from Johnny Wiltshire and the Trebletones, and acrobatics of a high order from Alando and Babs. There are also spots from the Zio Angels, the Kingston Babes and the Kingston Dancers.

The whole show, written, directed and produced by Barry Simons, is proving most popular.

'ALADDIN'

Pantomime presented by Eikan and Barry Simons at the New, Hull, written and directed by Barry Simons, with choreography by Joy Lammend.

Company includes: Arthur Sumner, Barbara Jackson, Johnny Wiltshire, Charles Mylne, Christina Artemis, Betty Allen, Chris Sheen, Helen Shapiro, Gerald Cowan, Max Bedford, Ron Edgeworth, Don Robb, Alando, Babs, The Zio Angels, The Kingston Babes, The Wlaits, The Trebletones.

IPSWICH

'ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD'

THE Ipswich Arts Company has a reputation for bright, clean pantomime—and this year they add another feather to their cap with "Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood". Avoiding irrelevant, red-nosed slapstick, we have genteel disarming comedy nicely interwoven into a well-written story which enthralled the youngsters by its stirring theme of noble patriotism.

When Robin Hood calls for volunteers in the storming of Nottingham Castle, the stage is engulfed by a cheering army of fervent young crusaders—plenty of audience participation here!

The show is beautifully dressed, Geoffrey Scott's sets are brilliantly colourful and, as usual at Ipswich, some magical lighting effects are achieved. Acting is consistently good—neat, tidy and (like the plot) admirably to the point.

Claire Warner's Robin Hood is a captivating blend of gallant nobility and the girl next door. She won all hearts and sang some charming duets with Maid Marian (Mikki Young). James Ward's Sheriff of Nottingham was a fine study of wickedness designed not to frighten the children, and the Robbers (Antony Webb and Peter Griffin) were also splendidly bad and funny all at the same time.

In tune with the production, Raymond Bowers' Dame was very well played with a kindly and immensely funny sense of humour which had the youngsters laughing all the time, while Alan Partington's Friar Tuck was joviality itself. In repertory pantomime, one does not always expect the best singing, but Kenneth Potevin, as Little John, was in fine voice with excellent tone and diction. Some delightful dance spots are, like the humour, neatly interwoven into the story line and the whole show is one of good taste and excellent direction.

Comedy predominates throughout, and with the aid of Sidney Jarvis's cleverly ambitious scenery, remarkable business is achieved on the small stage. James Bree, playing Dame for the first time, is a handsome and lovable grandmother, funny without being vulgar and delighted in by all the children.

Terence Seall gives a polished fairy characterisation to Sir False Hood, as does Sheila Keith as the amusing Dowager Fairy Dufful, a character much more for the grown-ups and welcomed by them.

A favourite with the young ones is Henry McGee as Lupe the wolf, especially after he is magically turned into a vegetarian and refuses to eat people, or even Bo Peep's pet lambs. Lucy Young is a fairy-tale Red Riding Hood, well matched by Fritha Knorr as Prince Florizel, and teamed with George Penstott as Florizel's friend Poppet.

'ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD'

Pantomime by Henry Marshall, with choreography by Michael Hamer, settings by Geoffrey Scott, costumes by Claire Rosshardt, directed by Alan Gray. Presented by the Arts Theatre Company at the Ipswich Arts.

Company includes: James Ward, Claire Warner, Derek Parkyn, Alan Partington, Kenneth Potevin, Mikki Young, Raymond Bowers, Susan and Florence Atkinson, Jeanette and Sandra Thurlow, Andrew McWhirter, Antony Webb, Peter Griffin, Penny Loe, Pauline Mason, Alan Gray, Michael Hamer, Anthony Atkinson, Lorraine Brookling, Jeanne Radford, John Abbott, D. A. Callaghan, Tim Hughes, Claire Luckham, Sydney Hilbert.

KIDDERMINSTER

'ALADDIN'

LITTLE attention is given to the story in this Agencia Productions' show, and the emphasis is on comedy—simple comedy clearly aimed at a young audience.

One of the best Boxing Day matinee audiences at the theatre for years, including a great many youngsters who made no secret of the fact that they enjoyed the show. This, perhaps, is the answer to any criticism, for although the show is

Comedian Larry Marsh plays Wishee Washee with a verve and affability to which the children immediately warm, but Larry Grayson's dame is the most ordinary of performances, and contributes little to the fun.

To Joan Ann Page goes the part of Aladdin but we see so little of her that one wonders whether the show should have been retitled "The Antics of Wishee Washee".

Like Marilyn Carroll, who plays Princess Jasmin, she is given the old song, but these seem to be only punctuation marks among the comedy pieces.

Alan Kent (Abanazar) has a good voice, but his numbers, too, are hurriedly sung in the context of the production. No one can argue against a large bank of comedy, but one could expect a little more adherence to the story. The Darrell Brothers provide the best of the supporting acts, and the dancing is by the Agencia Young Ladies and the Craigmere Juveniles under the direction of Elsie Dyer.

LANCASTER

'JACK AND THE BEANSTALK'

LANCASTER FOOTLIGHTS CLUB boasts 40 years of continuous performance, 14 of them in their present home, the Grand. With this experience behind them one expects the company to have well nigh professional expertise in their productions, and certainly "Jack and the Beanstalk" did not disappoint.

It was definitely traditional panto. To the title-role, Joan Butterworth brought good looks, a good voice and enunciation, and considerable acting ability, while playing opposite Alison Bancroft had the requisite winsome beauty and pleasing balladry.

Tom Walsh's Simple Simon was full of fun, and as the fatuous Mayor Kenneth Teasdale brought zest to a merry part. Ray Langley's ancient Gaffer Dribbledrip and Bessie Riley's dame were rollicking affairs. Linda Reay made a charming and graceful Fairy and a gem of a performance was turned in by Philip Johnson and Harold Saxon as Maisie, the cow.

'JACK AND THE BEANSTALK'

Pantomime by Ronald Parr. Presented by the Lancaster Footlights Club, directed by Lancaster. Costumes by Vera Johnson; décor by John Elliott and Peter Morgan. Directed by David Walton.

LEATHERHEAD

'RED RIDING HOOD'

JOHN CROCKER'S new pantomime, "Red Riding Hood", under his own direction at Leatherhead, is a fine blend of the traditional and the original, with an amusing taste of Victorian melodrama added for relish.

Mr. Crocker's Red Riding Hood is a poor and distant cousin of the Squire, Sir False Hood, who designs to make her the step-mother of his two sons, Hardy and Foolhardy. When prevented from foreclosing the mortgage, he engages the services of the local Wolf, with the results as laid down in all the best nursery books—only funnier.

Comedy predominates throughout, and with the aid of Sidney Jarvis's cleverly ambitious scenery, remarkable business is achieved on the small stage. James Bree, playing Dame for the first time, is a handsome and lovable grandmother, funny without being vulgar and delighted in by all the children.

Terence Seall gives a polished fairy characterisation to Sir False Hood, as does Sheila Keith as the amusing Dowager Fairy Dufful, a character much more for the grown-ups and welcomed by them.

'ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD'

Pantomime presented at Leatherhead Theatre Club by the Leatherhead Repertory Company Ltd. Book by John Crocker, music and lyrics by Eric Gilder. Settings by Sidney Jarvis, music by Peter Locke, choreography by Patti Brooks. Directed by John Crocker.

Cast includes: Jacqueline Clarke, Lucy Young, Terence Seall, Colin Bell, Reg Whitehead, George Penstott, Fritha Knorr, James Bree, Tim Matthews, Roger Carey, Sheila Keith, David Netheim and Henry McGee.

LEEDS

'GOLDLOCKS'

A RICH feast of real traditional pantomime—spectacle, colour, and animation, music, song and dance, comedy and laughter—is presented by Tom Arnold and John Beaumont in their "Goldlocks and the Three Bears" at the Grand, Leeds. The fairy story is simply and faithfully told and the children are held spellbound, save where, with shrieks of delight, they join their elders in the general and long sustained laughter.

David Whitfield is a sturdy Prince Romano with commanding presence and fine voice; Hazel Lee, as Goldlocks, a vivacious and tuneful singer; Lorna Green, Jay McGrath, and Anita Laine the three bears. The antics of Tony Heaton as Dame the woman circus owner, and Joe Black as Humphrey, the circus handymen, add life and soul to this pantomime and whilst they are on the fun is uproarious.

Peter Goodwright makes a sure impact on young and old with his impressions of Albert Modley and a host of music hall artists.

The circus ring affords the Charifien Troupe of acrobats a fine spot for their most exciting and almost electrifying whirlwind acrobatic display which works up the audience to a rare pitch of enthusiasm, and the Grand Dancers and Singers in their colourful costumes present pretty stage pictures and sing with ease and spirit. Jean Pearce, Children win all hearts with their contributions of song and dance routines. Ron Gregory, the inn keeper, has played in the opening village scene among the villagers and their merry-making.

The pantomime is produced by Anthony Collett and Lorna Green who also in addition to her rôle as Mother Bear, has been responsible for the painting of the scenery. Stanley C. Berkeley, as usual, is responsible for the musical arrangements and conducts his excellent orchestra with spirit and zest.

'GOLDLOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS'

Pantomime presented by Tom Arnold and John Beaumont at Leeds Grand, directed by Anthony Collett and Lorna Green with choreography by Sheila Miller.

Company includes: Ron Gregory, Joe Black, Hazel Lee, Tony Heaton, David Fallon, David Whitfield, Peter Goodwright, Lorna Green, Jay McGrath, Anita Laine, Katharine Glover, The Charifien Troupe, The Grand Dancers and Singers, Jean Pearce.

LEICESTER

'THE BOY FRIEND'

THE Phoenix, Leicester. Christmas production of "The Boy Friend" was a dubious seasonal attraction, at the outset. The company presented a broad interpretation with vigour, and enthusiasm, but failed to capture the mood.

The honours go to Madam Dubonnet, Anne Carr, replacing Pamela Charles at short notice, gave her a deliciously naughty aura, without destroying the dignity of the schoolmistress. The achievements of shapely Gillian Royale, as a wistful romantic Polly, were outstanding too.

The humour was helped along considerably by their "Poor Little Pierrette" duet in the third act, and by the understanding of Johnathan Meddings and Mark Griffiths as the gay old spark, Lord Brockhurst and his formidable consort.

This wasn't the best production Nicholas Barter has handled and the dancing was rather ragged.

'THE BOY FRIEND'

Revival of the musical play by Sandy Wilson, presented at the Phoenix, Leicester, directed by Nicholas Barter, designed by Adrian Vaux and with choreography by Brid Paton.

Company includes: Brenda Peters, Pamela Greenhill, Elizabeth Hughes, Phillip Ureahart, Janet Michael, Gillian Royale, Robert Morris, Richard Eric, Michael Carr, John Levitt, Norman Henry, John Watts, Jonathan Meddings, Mary Grubb, Derek Carpenter.

LINCOLN

'MOTHER GOOSE'

FOR many years now, the Lincoln Theatre Company has been presenting its own pantomimes, which have delighted local audiences with their life, colour and originality. This year's "Mother Goose" is no exception. Written and directed by Alan Vaughan Williams. "Mo'her Goose" is the kind of show that suits the Lincoln Theatre Company very well.

Playing the dame, Mother Goose, Brian Tully fairly romps through the show at a pace that is almost exhausting to watch. His energy and zest for this part sets the tone of the whole pantomime.

Mother Goose's daughter, Jill, played by Jenny McNae, has the spirit of her mother, but translated into more feminine terms. Young and lovely Jenny fits the principal girl part admirably—she sings very well too.

Jill is eventually won by Jack, played by April Walker, after much of the traditional skirmishing. The realisation of Jack's affection comes across nicely in her solo number "Small Talk".

Tom Dickson's Simple Simon is a firm favourite with the audience. Jumping and rolling around the stage he seems to enjoy himself as much as the audience enjoys watching him. The three likeable villains,

BARRI CHATT AND TERRI GARDNER

UGLY SISTERS

Pavilion Theatre, Weymouth

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