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Group: Molesey Musical Theatre
Show: Jack and the Beanstalk
Venue: Cecil Hepworth Playhouse, Walton-on-Thames
Date: 18th November 2023
Director & Choreographer: Claire Leonard
Musical Director: Elizabeth Cooper

The Hepworth was filled with a massive, excited audience. Front of House were smoothly ushering people to & from the bar and into their seats. The excellent programme was crammed full of good photos and information. The set contained an attractive backcloth with good accessories and props. All were efficiently used and moved.

Outfits were cheery and colourful. The Cow's costume looked great. The Giant's henchmen were certainly sinister, but their clothes were rather downbeat and drab. Make-up was well applied, especially for the Dame and Pat the Cow.

Lighting was very good and precise and the sound effects were well timed.

Elizabeth Cooper's band maintained an excellent accompaniment throughout. MMT is fortunate to have a live ensemble of this quality.

Jack and Jill were energetically played by Darcey Conway and Emily Jesshop. Darcey gave Jack a great personality; and Emily played her heart out as the sweet Princess Jill. They sang an attractive duet, *Counting Stars*.

Paul Winder played a fine, lively dame as Tilly Trott...fearlessly trotting out the old jokes with a crystal clear delivery. He sang a good interpretation of *The Boy Does Nothing*.

Marie Riordan gave us a lovely Simple Simon...fully in the character and winding up the crowd...especially on *Cauliflowers Fluffy*, with Pat the Cow. Pat was well presented by Wendy Tyler with lots of fun and energy. It was nice to have the Cow as a real character, rather than two people struggling to keep in step.

Paul Cox was his usual regal self, playing a relaxed and confident King Crumble. Interesting tabard he was wearing...thought it was a keyboard for a moment.

Fairy Evergreen (Donna Hunter) was a delight. A strong characterisation, she worked the audience well and was more than a match for the baddies. Along with Jack, she sang a good *One Way or Another*, whilst the cute little Aquarius team danced.

Good to see Kevin King and Iain Cannell back in action as the laid-back Giant's henchmen Fleshcreep and Spinach.

As always, the MMT chorus sang, acted and moved with bags of enthusiasm; from the cheery

opening number *Life's a Happy Song* through to the exuberance of *Walking on Sunshine*. Particularly liked *Larger Than Life* with the Floater People ("Floater People"...good grief!).

But my favourite routine has to be *Twelve Days of Christmas*, which was glorious mayhem and utterly, achingly funny.

It was a fun pantomime with plenty of traditional themes, lots of energy and more POO jokes than you could shake a (Pooh) stick at.

Thank you Claire Leonard and your team for a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Graham Botterill