

BRANTHAM AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY

Alice In Wonderland, written by Tom Hitchcock.

**Director Tom Hitchcock
Assistant Director Mark Hinson
Choreographer Frankie Swan
Producer Tina Burns
Musical Directors Hannah Wainwright and Guy Eade**

Performed at Brantham Village Hall on Thursday 24th February 2022

I was warmly welcomed on arrival by Producer Tina Burns. This script was written for the society by Director, Tom Hitchcock. A number of the cast were unwell and/or isolating and last minute changes to the line up and substitutions meant that a few cast members were on stage with scripts. This in no way at all affected this production which moved along at a cracking pace with plenty of comedy throughout. Well done to all the substitutes !

Sophie Reid as White Rabbit and Georgie Spall, as Alice, opened the First Act with a bright and breezy song in the secret garden which had a hollowed out tree trunk as the rabbit hole. Sophie and Georgie played these roles really well. Alice's father, Richard Heath and stepmother, Clare Fraser-Hopewell, followed before the scene switched to the throne room and the entrance of the King and Queen of Hearts, played by Richard Heath and Natalie Dwan. This was an excellent pairing with Richard as a bumbling King and Natalie as an energetic, scheming, extravagant and effervescent Queen. In other words the "baddie"! There was an excellent rendition of "Killer Queen" with Joker, Tom Hitchcock, Ace, Arjan van Heuvein, Number 10, Roger Weeley and 2, 4, 6 and 8 of Hearts all joining the King and Queen. Tom was amazing in this role (which he had taken at short notice !), Arjan was smooth and falsely charming, Roger was staunchly upright and the 4 cards, Ben Wilkinson, Michael Challis, Pippa Revell and Alan Jones all played strong and very different characters. This was a really good scene.

The scene then moved to the forest and the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, with Ben Cook as Mad Hatter, David Chilton as March Hare and Dormouse, played delightfully by Felix Hitchcock. This was a loud, boisterous and hilarious scene, a bit of a madhouse really!

Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum ,played by Toby Smith and Lewis Howlett were the funny clowns and did they enjoy these roles. They were mischievous, pushing and shoving each other and used plenty of slapstick style comedy and mayhem.

White Queen, Frankie Swan had an excellent duet, "I Want To Break Free" with the Mad Hatter, both of whom had strong voices. Other songs and routines which impressed were "Everybody Needs Somebody", "I'm A Believer" and the Finale of "Anyway You Want It".

There were some really strong voices in this cast and the dance routines, choreographed by Frankie Swan , were lively and fitting.

The UV scene was stunning and featured a wonderful caterpillar, John Hoskyns, in the most attractive and extravagant costumes on stage. Cheshire Cat, Laura Pitchell also had a fabulous pink and purple costume which was perfect.

Angie Heath had a small but important role as Nell whilst Oscar van Heuvein was the Knave of Hearts and Sarah Twinn was Rowena.

The 4 piece band were very supportive of the actors and found just the right sound levels. They certainly appeared to be enjoying themselves.

Scenes were changed smoothly and unobtrusively and the sets designed and constructed by Lisa Butler, Mark Hinson and others were very attractive. Costumes, Tina Burns and others were bright, colourful, extravagant sometimes but utterly right for the characters.

This was a sparkling production from this talented group. Many congratulations to Director, Tom Hitchcock for writing and directing this brilliant production.

The audience certainly enjoyed this and so did I.

**Hazel Hole MBE,
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