

## 'The Pied Piper' review

On 14/12/2018 I went to Cornerstone, Didcot to watch their second in-house Christmas production 'The Pied Piper'. I decided to review this because the year before I took part in their Christmas play 'The Nutcracker and the Mouse King' and wanted to see a play in this cosy venue from an audience perspective.

In short, 'The Pied Piper' is based in a fictional Oxfordshire town called 'Hamelin'; in this town everyone has to be perfect, or else the feared Pied Piper will return to take them away – however, one day the Butcher's son 'Benny' decides to start a rebellion and encourages the other children to pull a prank. This does not end well when 'Glenda', the Mayor's wicked assistant finds out and magically turns Benny into rat (the actor cleverly showed this by manning a puppet rat, and made noises to elaborate the transformation).

Meanwhile, the Mayor's daughter 'Peta' finds out Benny is missing and begins looking for him. She is confronted by 'The Green Man' who helps Peta discover that she is destined to be the Pied Piper of this age. Eventually, we found out that Glenda is an evil alchemist with a thirst for power. So Peta – now knowing her destiny – comes to save 'Hamelin'.

However, Glenda has other ideas; steals the Pied Piper's flute, hypnotises everyone and then gets the Mayor to hand over his powers to her. In the end Peta must endeavour to save the day, so that the children of 'Hamelin' may live a more fun-filled life.

I liked how the director gave every child taking part a chance to perform a short singing solo or line in the production because I feel it gives them an opportunity to feel like they have contributed, are included, gaining experience and also gaining in confidence – this gave the show an inclusive, warm feel to see the children enjoy in what they are partaking in. I also liked how the main actors played all the music for their songs with their instruments on set.

One of my favourite parts was when the children were being shown the original story of 'The Pied piper', which was delivered by using shadow puppets to portray the dark story of the original Pied Piper to the children, which was used to make the children 'stay in line' and 'be perfect'.

I found the show was quite dark for a Christmas play. So, I think, although there was humour (mainly based around the 'Mayor' character), they could have made it a little more light-hearted by adding more jokes through some of the other characters. I also think they could have had a set change because the set stayed the same throughout the entire performance. Lastly, in the story when Benny 'goes missing', the actor could be seen back on stage, in costume, playing the drums – which defeats the magic of the story.

The play, as whole, consisted of music, drama, dance and singing, they also used lighting that reflected the story perfectly, everything I would expect from their performance.

I would recommend the play to others because I enjoyed the show and how it was a family-friendly performance that I think had very catchy songs and good way to spend a day with family and friends.

Overall, I found the play was very exciting and interesting. I thought the plot was very clever, and that it suggested a fab sequel to an already great and classic story.