

ARTS AWARD PART B

•REVIEW OF A SHOW•

For part B I had to review a performance of my choice. After a long search on theatre websites my family and I came across the Oxford Playhouse website. We found out that the Oxfordshire Youth Music Theatre (OYMT), a group of very keen performers in Year 10 and above, were going to put on a production of 'The Wizard of Oz' from Wednesday 8th to Saturday 11th May 2013. This seemed like a perfect show to review for this task.



Even though I've been to the Oxford Playhouse numerous times to watch pantomimes over the Christmas holidays, I did not know what to expect as I have never seen the OYMT perform before.

As we collected our tickets the lady at the desk said I would really enjoy the show!



Photo of stage and orchestra

Once we had taken our seats I noticed a lot of the people in the audience were school children or students, my guess was that most were into performing arts. Our seats were in the circle at the front so we were fortunate enough to see the band in the orchestra pit warming up. One person was surrounded by about five different instruments (what a hard job!), I realised then that he was the percussionist.

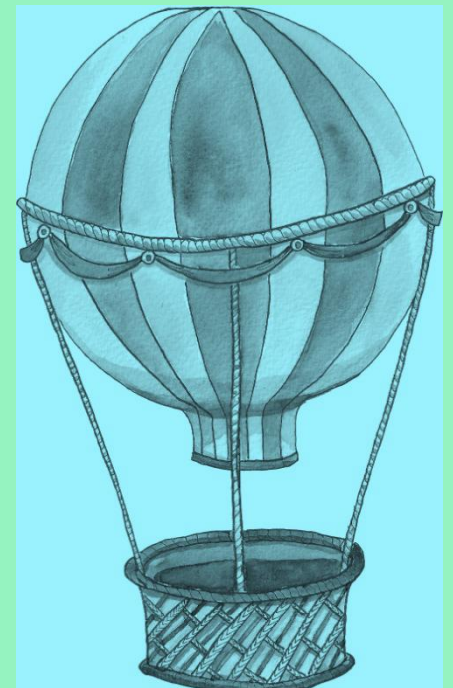


Accents

When the show started the first thing I noticed was the accents. They made it sound like they were really from Kansas. If there was an award for the best accent it would go to George Wolstenholme (Uncle Henry).

Effects

The next thing that impressed me was the lighting and effects. During the twister moment of the story, lighting and smoke would come together to make it look almost real. But sometimes you didn't need major effects to make the show enjoyable. When the 'wizard' floats away in a hot air balloon, the character was just in the wings speaking – but because all of the actors on stage were looking up it made it look like he was up in the sky.



Extras

The next part of the story is when Dorothy (Hannah Tomkins) meets Glinda and the munchkins in munchkinland. During this whole time up until she meets the wicked witch and sets off down the yellow brick road EVERYBODY was always acting, even if they weren't talking or part of the conversation they were making expressions on their faces to accompany the conversation – making them involved.

Comedy

Both the wicked witch (Dora Baker) and the lion (Remi King) were the best at making people laugh with their jokes and funny script. There was just the right amount of comedy spaced out through the performance to keep the audience laughing. Another hilarious part was not what somebody said, not what somebody was wearing – it was a character- Toto! He was a string puppet that was operated by Bridie Sheppard; the other actors on stage had to pretend she was not there! The puppeteer made sure that Toto's feelings came across (by tail wagging, sitting down etc).

Singing

In the show a character's singing really matched their personality, for example when the lion was singing about being a king, he would use his falsetto voice. Also their feelings matched their feelings, when Dorothy was sad it really showed in her voice, as did happiness, hope and fear.

Throughout the first half of the production the cast took one song and used it each time a new character appeared, changing small parts to fit in. They took the song 'we're off to see the wizard' and as Dorothy met the three characters: Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Lion, each of them would join in with the song that was repeated over and over.

Costumes

The costumes really matched the characters, everything on their clothing related to the role they were playing. If the actors walked down the road in their costumes you would definitely be able to tell who/what they are.

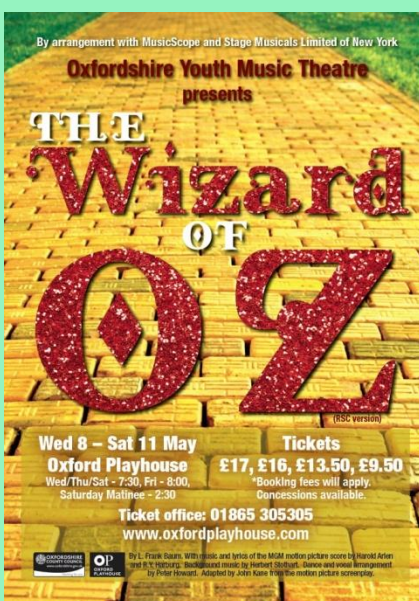
Orchestra

I was quite surprised about how many musicians made up the orchestra and how many different instruments were being played. There were a variety, some that I knew like the trumpet – and some that I didn't know could be an instrument like a car wheel!

The orchestra did a great job in the show; they were concentrating hard on the conductor to make sure they didn't make a mistake or miss their introduction.

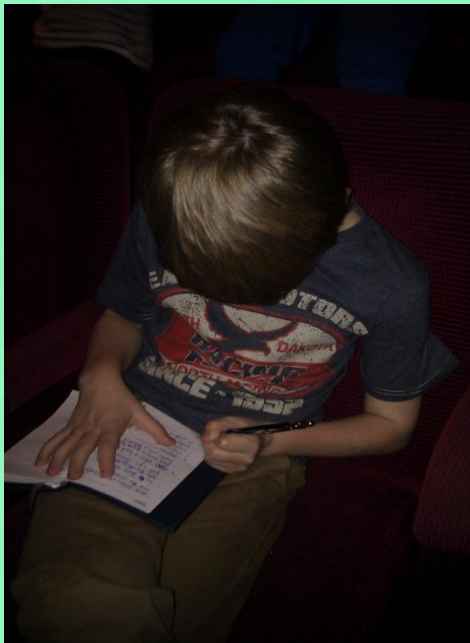
To conclude

I thoroughly enjoyed the production of the Wizard of Oz by the Oxfordshire Youth Music Theatre group; I will look out for their future performances and make sure I book tickets!





Reported by Jamie Andrews



Me taking notes during the interval



Outside the Playhouse before the show