

OTTERSHAW PLAYERS

'TREASURE ISLAND' – NOVEMBER 2007

Alan Wakefield is to be congratulated on yet another first class set which greeted the audience on entering the theatre for your production of 'Treasure Island'. In the second act it converted smoothly from Forecastle/ Inn into Poop Deck, and full use by Danny of the different levels added interest and a feeling of reality to the piece. There were a wonderful variety of characters depicted and the cast were energetic in their performance.

There were some good individual performances, one of them being Jenny as Lady Trelawney. She was suitably upper-crust whilst at the same time had a very down to earth attitude and likeable personality. She also brought out the comedy in the role.

Her friend Lucy Livesey who was a little less at ease with the motley crew was played soundly by Alison Buyers, and Tony Richardson made a good Captain Smollet. He clearly narrated the second act, which made the story much easier to follow.

Unfortunately Jack Breslin, in the role of Jim Hawkins, rushed through his dialogue in the first act and seldom spoke with his head up or facing the audience. Having seen him perform before I was surprised. In 'Teechers' his dialogue was fast but in the context of that particular play it wasn't so important. In the second act when Jim rushes onto the deck with an announcement, it was only his actions that led us to understand that it was something significant as the words couldn't be heard. He raised his performance in the second act- maybe the narration was the problem?

Brian Inns came across well as Long John Silver and as far as never working with children and animals goes, Brian almost stole the scene.

What a fantastic parrot and I understand the creation of Matthew Horton who 'worked' him. Matthew must have studied the actions of birds in some depth as they were so natural, and his own movements as Captain Flint were unobtrusive making Brian appear even more real.

[Editor's note: I'm not sure if Gloria hasn't got a bit confused as to the identities of Long John and Captain Flint here!]

The Welsh accent was convincing on Blind Pugh and George Grafton dressed all in black was a scary character, as was Black Dog played by Bill Jackson. His canine behaviour was convincing!

In the role of George Merry/Billy Bones, Mark Holton was super. He was natural and confident, and his every word could be heard.

Sandy Hurle gave a good performance as the ragged and demented Ben Gun, and Roberto Buttaci with his 'squeezebox' added much to the musical numbers, although he looked a little too serious for the lively music he played.

Paul Bungard (Israel Hands) and Nathaniel Crisp (Amanda Keating) played their parts well and I liked Chloe Wigmore as Gentleman Jack. Her diction was good too. I wondered if it was written with a female cast in that role or if that was your own idea. Either way it worked.

The Sea Bitches all portrayed their own characters strongly and were an important constituent in the roundness of the tale, and the youngsters were comfortable in their roles.

Costumes were very good indeed and make up was in keeping for each character.

Props were also good and the back stage crew worked efficiently so that the show ran smoothly.

Going ashore on the boat was super, (shades of the boat on the canal in 'WITW') and also the cheese dream. It was a great idea to have a skeleton and Davy Jones Locker in the auditorium so that cast could involve the audience.

The lighting was well plotted and operated and there were good sound effects.

Your programme is nicely set out and the condensed biography of R.L. Stevenson was interesting.

Thank you for inviting me to see 'Treasure Island' and for your kind hospitality on the evening.

As always I enjoyed your production but I didn't feel that the content of this particular show was as good as others you've done. There were a lot of children in the audience and there were times when the periods of dialogue were too long to sustain their interest. Maybe the addition of more musical numbers would have helped. The volume and quality of the singing was good.

I look forward to seeing Oscar Wilde's play in May and meantime wish you all a happy Christmas and a healthy 2008.

E. Gloria Smith
N.O.D.A Representative – Region 12