

# “The Wizard of Oz” works its magic in Epsom

16 December 2023



Friday 15th December was opening night for this seasons annual pantomime at the **Epsom Playhouse**. **Kate Spiller**, founder of the production company said “We are delighted to present the classic tale of ‘THE WIZARD OF OZ’ ... This well known story follows Dorothy in her adventures along the ‘Yellow Brick Road: Her 3 great friends -The Lion, Tin Man and The Scarecrow join her in her search for the Wonderful Wizard. We have stuck very closely to the original story line with our production, although this talented cast have added much comedy and humour.”

She added “Many thanks must be given to **Mrs Elaine Teague** and her team at the Playhouse, who work very hard throughout the year to bring you a whole array of theatrical productions. Special thanks are also due to the great number of ‘mums and dads’ that have driven their children to rehearsals and performances over the last few weeks allowing us to have over 200 Munchkins in the show and opening up a whole new world to these talented youngsters.”

The players maintained a giddy momentum and energy throughout a packed programme of dance routines, pantomime banter and adult innuendoes.

The synchronization of vivid computer animated backdrops, a lively sound-track and the stage actions worked wonders in creating the dream-like qualities at the heart of the Wizard of Oz experience.

Sadly, copyright issues and cost mean the songs we are familiar with from the original “Judy Garland” film version will not be sung at the Playhouse.

Shining though were the performances of Emily Day as Dorothy, Rikki Stone’s scarecrow and though unpopular in the traditional way, Jake Anthony Pearse’s charismatic role as the Wicked Witch was appreciated at the final curtain.

The Lisa Jayn dancers didn’t miss a beat in a variety of the main dance routines.

No less than six local young persons dance groups sourced the 200 little munchkins. None could have been taller than 4 feet. 20 were on stage at a time and performed with great professionalism. They included The Arnould School of Dancing, Gemini Dancers, The Italia Conti - Reigate, Joco Dance and Theatre Arts, Starstruck and Epsom’s Terri-Jayne’s School of Dance.

The success of the night is a tribute to the workings of an Epsom and Ewell Borough Council owned and managed arts venue, working in collaboration with artists in the private sector.

You can get tickets for performances through to 1st January 2024 via the Epsom Playhouse box office. Even at the full adult price of £25 the entertainment is good value for money and no commuting necessary.