**CINDERELLA – The Fairy Godmother of all Pantomimes**

**Audio Described performance – Act One**

**Thursday 9th January @ 2:30 pm; Wednesday 15th January (Relaxed Performance) @ 12:30 pm; Friday 17th January 2020 @ 7 pm.**

Good Afternoon everyone - welcome to the Theatre Royal Plymouth for this Qdos production of the Fairy Godmother of all pantomimes - CINDERELLA; written by Michael Harrison and Brian Conley, directed by Kathryn Rooney with a live five-piece orchestra directed by David Lane.

I am Denise your audio describer for Act One which lasts for 60 minutes followed by a 20 minute interval. My colleague Pauline will then describe Act Two. Please note, there will be pyrotechnics, smoke and flashing lights.

Once upon a time the very first pantomime was staged in London, at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane during the early 18th century. Whilst mainly for children based on a fairy tale or nursery story, the combination of comedy, slap stick, topical jokes, music and sheer entertainment endears pantomime to the whole family.

I will now give you a synopsis of Act One followed by a description of the set, costumes and principle characters.

Cinderella tells the story of a young orphaned girl who is put to work by her evil step mother and bullied by her two step-sisters, until a chance encounter with her Fairy Godmother changes everything.

As the audience take their seats they are greeted with a deep plush pink velvet curtain fringed with silver and adorned with pink silhouettes of glass slippers interspersed with twinkling stars. The proscenium is grey, pink and dark blue with several arched gothic style windows, behind which are deep blue clouded night skies. The spotlights are curved castellations tipped in pink with pink lights placed at intervals. Two arched stained glass windows are on either side of the proscenium with a blue roofed steeple. At the very top of the proscenium placed at intervals are four large glitter balls.

As the orchestra begins the glass slippers and stars fade to reveal the word CINDERELLA and we hear the voice of the Fairy Godmother introducing the story. Then with a crack and a flash the curtain parts in the centre; the Fairy Godmother appears, looking resplendent in a long puff sleeved glittering white and silver fitted dress with front slit and a full over skirt. She is tall and slim with a tall sparkling tiara on her lovely blonde wavy hair which falls onto her shoulders and a small pair of silvery wings on the back of her dress.

As she finishes the Prologue and with a wave of her obligatory silver wand, the curtains part slightly to reveal Prince Charming at the Royal Palace. A tall slim handsome young man with long wavy fair hair swept back from his forehead. He wears a long sleeved white shirt over a deep plum and gold long waistcoat with a matching short cape draped over his left shoulder and a gold sash across his chest, black velvet leggings and gold boots. His dashing aide Dandini appears by his side. A slim dark haired young man dressed similarly to the Prince, but with a blue waistcoat, and no cape.

The story begins in the village - a highly coloured backdrop of tall houses with the Coach and Horses pub on the left and The Slipper Inn to the right. It is here we first meet Cinderella. A slim pretty young girl with shoulder length blonde hair dressed in a pink knee length blue patched full skirt edged in white, topped with a pink laced bodice with white puffed sleeves and a small white pocket apron tied around her waist. Pretty pink cupid heeled shoes complete this charming costume.

As the gauze curtain lifts on the Village Square, Cinderella is joined by the villagers and children going about their daily business. The village girls dressed in pink, green, blue full skirted dresses with small dainty hats and pink shoes. The boys wear colourful matching long sleeve shirts and waistcoats over fawn coloured leggings and pink boots. The children mirror the village girls’ costumes.

On the left, steps lead down from one of the houses to the square. A similar set of steps are also on the far right. It is here that the ugly sisters - Tess and Claudia - first make their appearance. Both dressed outrageously, Tess is very tall and thin wearing an orange wig piled high on her head. Blue fluffy bolero over a brightly striped short top with a matching striped short skirt and red ankle boots. By contrast Claudia is short, black and portly, with a huge yellow wig, pink fluffy jacket over a multi coloured striped dress. They enter carrying large white Primark shopping bags.

As they leave, Buttons appears dressed in a white long sleeved shirt over a blue military style sleeveless jacket edged in gold braid and buttons, blue trousers with a gold side stripe. A slim man with dark hair, Buttons enters into some audience participation.

Buttons continues this in scene three with a panto rendition of Plymouth’s Got Talent and the help of the ugly sisters, once again dressed outrageously in black and white striped outfits.

The story then moves to The Forest. The stage is covered in dry ice as Cinderella sits on a wall of tree trunks surrounded by an arbour of trees. On the left is an old flat tree stump. A fox, stag and rabbit appear and sit beneath Cinderella.

Then outside Hardup Hall, Dandini appears with the invitations to the Palace ball. The Prince meets Buttons and the outrageous ugly sisters dressed as two of the Spice Girls. Tess as Ginger Spice in a short sleeveless Union Jack dress with glittery Union Jack ankle boots and ginger wig. Claudia is dressed as Scary Spice in a leopard skin jump suit and a bouffant brown shoulder length wig.

Back in the kitchen of Hardup Hall Cinderella is on her hands and knees mopping the floor; bucket beside her. In the centre is a long wooden kitchen table with a basket on top and a box of fruit underneath. Either end is two chairs. A pink check tablecloth is draped over the chair on the far right with a laptop on the seat. Three rustic ringed candle lit chandeliers hang above the table. An arched door is centre back with shelving to the right laden with kitchen wares and food. A stove is to the left of the door and a large pumpkin sits on the shelf in the next alcove. The sisters appear dressed in long flamboyant robes. Tess in deep pink edged in frills and a gold bow tied around her waist and blue gloves. Claudia wears the same style robe but in green with purple gloves. Both wear bouffant wigs with curlers in the front – Tess in yellow and Claudia in orange. Buttons comforts the somewhat disappointed Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother once again works her magic with a wave of her wand.

Then with the wonders of pantomime magic it is off to the Ball. Cinderella, now transformed into the dazzling Princess Starlight sits in the coach with Buttons resplendently dressed as a coachman. The gilded carriage led by two white horses rides out over the audience in spectacular style.

Cast

Buttons - is played by the master of Panto, Brian Conley

The handsome Prince Charming – by Will Richardson

Fairy Godmother – is played by the sparkling Jenny Gayner

Dashing Dandini – by Ed Wade

Ugly Sister Tess – by the seasoned panto dame Ben Stock

Ugly Sister Claudia – by the effervescent Neal Wright

Cinderella – is played by the delightful Sarah Vaughan

The villagers and courtiers are played by the Ensemble of eight girls and boys

The Theatre Royal Babes consist of the Red and Blue teams with eight babes in each team.