

**Review: Fisherman's Friends**

**By Dulcie Harrison**

***Fisherman's Friends* at Theatre Royal Plymouth**

Be transported to beautiful Cornwall with *Fisherman's Friends: The Musical*, at Theatre Royal Plymouth until 10th September. A brand-new feel-good production, which is based on the true story of the Cornish band, has embarked on a UK tour, starting at TRP.

I'm sure you are familiar with the amazing rise to fame of a group of fishermen from Port Isaac, but this truly is a story which is a roller coaster of emotions filled with captivating music, beautiful scenery and mind-blowing effects.

The stage was cleverly designed by Lucy Osborne and allows the story to start at sea, leading us to the harbour and then into the heartbeat of the village, the Golden Lion pub, which brings everyone together following a day on the waters. The talented cast tell the tale of a group of fishermen who are spotted by music manager Danny Anderson, played by Jason Langley, on a trip from London, who discovers a whole new world and meaning of life through the power of the shanties he overhears.

Jason portrays a real fish out of water, as a Londoner unable to survive without a phone signal. His story plays out to be one of realisation. He is living a superficial lifestyle in London while finding love and the true meaning of happiness, respect and community with Alwyn, played by Parisha Shahmir, and her steadfast belief in doing what is right.

Parisha portrays her character with passion and perfection, that will have you believing her love for Cornwall, her community and her family who keeps her grounded, despite having a singing talent that would see her be successful if given the right opportunity.

James Gaddas plays Jim and really conveys the importance of the fisherman's trade to the village and to the generations that came before them. Alwyn encourages the shanty group to take the opportunity for an album despite a hesitant Jim, most of the men are up for a chance.

Familiar topics are sprinkled through the show: the second home invasion in Cornwall, the pubs struggling to stay afloat despite being crucial to communities, the daily plight the fishermen have, all things we recognise and allow the audience to empathise with the characters.

Every single cast member has a voice that is simply amazing and a pleasure to listen to but collectively you are blown away. The songs come thick and fast, with sea shanties sung with such passion, you can't help tapping your foot along with the band who intermingle with the cast effortlessly.

This show has a real feel-good factor to it, apart from the warm familiarity of places we have all visited mentioned throughout such as Padstow, Devon, and our home city Plymouth you get real belly laughs as the group visit Soho-London and perform a shanty in a place you'd least expect it, full of bright lights, bursts of colour, and something you will truly have to watch for yourself!

There are some real poignant moments where, through old Cornish songs, we hear the echoes of past generations' plights of failing trades whether at sea or in the Cornish mines - songs of men lost at sea and the families they left behind.

Overall, this show is an absolute must-see. It gives us everything we need. The story of families clinging to tradition and the importance of acceptance, the underdog winning in more ways than one and to the overall success of the community, because that's what is important, community and having others we can rely on.

This is a voyage about friendship filled with music that will give you goosebumps from the very start and give any land-lover a mighty longing for the sea. *Fisherman's Friends* warms your heart; it will make you wish you had a song book so you could sing along. Everyone is outstanding and there isn't a moment you're not entertained. It will make you feel proud to be from the West Country!