

Review: Cinderella *****



When the editor of The Edinburgh Reporter told me I was going to review Cinderella, the much-loved pantomime at Edinburgh's Kings Theatre, I responded in traditional panto fashion. 'Oh, no I'm not!' I replied. 'I have never been to a pantomime in my life and I'm not going to start now'. Her reply was brief and to the point. 'Oh, yes you are' she said, 'or else your career with Edinburgh's best news and media website will be behind you!' (that's enough panto gags – Ed)

However, I was mighty glad I did go to the fairy godmother of all pantomimes on Wednesday evening. The Holy Trinity of Panto – Allan Stewart, Andy Gray and local hero Grant Stott – have returned to the King's for the 13th time as a trio. And they provided a hugely entertaining evening to a packed and appreciative audience.

Veteran Allan Stewart has appeared so many times at the old theatre over the years I wouldn't be surprised if the King's aren't charging him rent. He plays Auntie May, Cinderella's Fairy Godmother and despite being a star of stage for half a century, Stewart clearly still loves the pantomime season and his infectious enthusiasm certainly has its effect on his co-stars. Stewart has worked with Andy Gray on numerous occasions and their great friendship is there for all to see, particularly when one of them makes a wee error which is immediately pounced on by the other with great hilarity.

Gray plays the part of Buttons, the lovable servant who has Cinderella's best interests at heart. Keeping it in the Gray family is his daughter Clare who plays one of the ugly sisters – Ruth. Maureen Carr – one of the stars of BBC Scotland's hit comedy Still Game – plays the other ugly sister – Nicola. Perhaps a wee nod there to the political landscape in

Scotland? Who knows?!

Grant Stott plays the part of Baroness Hibernia Hardup, the wicked stepmother and he plays the part with great panache. Stott is, of course, a well-known fan of Hibernian FC and his reference to hating the Jambos brought a laugh even from Hearts fans present (including the former Lord Provost Eric Milligan)

The part of Cinderella is played by Gillian Parkhouse, star of 'Singin' in the Rain' in London's West End while Prince Charming is played by James Darch, another London West End performer (Wicked) and who has also appeared in the BBC Television drama New Tricks.

The young dance troupe were highly impressive and the special effects just before the interval were breath-taking.

But the stars of the show are undoubtedly the 'terrible trio' of Stewart, Gray and Stott. The classic folk tale was given the 'Embra' treatment from the off and the audience lapped it up. Stott's assertion that Cinderella's father 'gies me the boak' is a line you won't hear in any other performance of Cinderella anywhere else in the world! At the ball, Baroness Hardup says she feels 'about as welcome as a Jambo at Easter Road!' I'm pretty sure the Brothers Grimm didn't include that in their original transcript!

It was great entertainment, nearly two hours of good old-fashioned laugh-out-loud pleasure. You don't need to be a child to enjoy this panto. It's great fun for adults too. And the great news is that the show runs for the next six and a half weeks!

If you want to treat a loved one this Christmas – or as a New Year gift – get them a ticket to see this show. They'll thank you for it.

Edinburgh Reporter rating: ***** (oh yes it is!)

Cinderella is at the King's Theatre, Leven Street, Edinburgh until 21st January 2018. Tickets [here](#).