

Don't stop me now, I'm having a ball at The Brunton

The Queen classic Don't Stop Me Now boomed out from the stage at the finale of Cinderella. The lyrics seemed to aptly sum up the audience reaction and they are: "Don't stop me now, I'm having such a good time. I'm having a ball."

The 200-plus audience saw seven committed performers and the young, locally-recruited chorus, work jolly hard to entertain.

Yes, this is not an extravagant production with lavish sets and costumes, but it is a traditional panto delivered with real energy and enthusiasm.

There is pathos, there is humour, there are local gags, it's topical and the almost two-hour show has a host of foot-tapping hit songs with words changed to suit.

It also has bags of audience participation and actors pop up in all parts of the intimate 297-seat auditorium.

The ovation at the end of the thoroughly enjoyable performance spoke volumes. The audience loved it and the committed cast deserved the applause.

John Binnie's adaptation revolves around poor Cinderella who used to be the star of the circus but, after the death of her father, her wicked stepmother took charge along with her two daughters, man-mad Mince and Tatties.

Cinderella is forced to be the cleaner and one of her tasks is scooping up elephant poo from Musselburgh prom.

The local racecourse is also a location giving rise to a raft of puns, none of them thoroughbred, but many worthy of a smile or chuckle.

And nearby Tantallon Castle is the location for the masked ball which leads to Cinderella linking with the Prince. You know the plot so I'll not go any further.

Graham Crammond is Mince, one of the ugly sisters. He trained at nearby Queen Margaret University and returns after starring in last year's panto. His pantomime skill, comic timing and facial expressions help make this show.

His sidekick is Tatties played with vigour by Andrew Dyer and he appears on stage with Graham for the first time in ten years. They work well together.

Wendy Seager appeared to relish her role of the wicked stepmother and Edinburgh-born Ross Donnachie, who apparently attend The Brunton every Christmas every year as a child, was ideally cast as Buttons, the clown and loyal servant.

He can be credited with on the more topical lines in the entertaining show when he said: "It's hard to be a Prince as every move is scrutinised." Good line that.

Estrid Barton played a caring Fionnuala Fairy who lost her powers but managed to retrieve them in time to help Cinderella.

Eilidh Weir was excited to be playing Cinders and it showed while Lewis Lauder is making his pantomime debut. The Falkirk-born performer, a graduate of Edinburgh Napier University, requires to relax into the role as Prince Charlie.

That said, the close-knit team of musical director, Tommie Travers, in his fifth straight year with The Brunton panto, Robin Mitchell, who has been set and costume designer for four previous Musselburgh pantos, Rhian Monro, choreographer, and

lighting designers Ian Curtis, in his 12th panto as chief technician, and Craig Dixon, deserve credit for their work. Everybody makes a little go a long way.

Cinderella is on until January 4 and this is a panto which was enjoyed by all ages on the night I was there.

The show will be British sign language interpreted on Friday, December 20 and audio described on the same night.

And adjustments will be made on Friday, January 3 (2pm) to create a friendly and supportive atmosphere for people with autism and their families.