

Funtime for Nomads

Showtime Ever After, at New Greenham Arts, from Thursday, March 21 to Saturday, March 23

Author/director Holly Lucas' bubbly show was a feast of fairytales, though the old stories had undergone radical changes. After the feisty, cohesive opening number, Skid Row, we met Linderella (Paige Mackay) and her dad (Bob Phillips) who are broke.

Linderella yearns to be a princess, but it's a long way from her home in Skid Row to a palace. Nevertheless, this is fairyland and along comes Prince Robbie (Neil Harvey) who has escaped from the tower where his wicked stepmother (Ann Buckley) keeps him.

Of course there are ugly sisters (Andy Pocock and James Pascall-Smith glittering magnificently in over-the-top orange dresses) and all attend the auditions for princess. With the help of her fairy godfather (a bewinged Shaun Blake) Linderella succeeds, but of course that's not the end of her troubles.

The Spring Nomads productions are unfailingly full of enthusiastic performers and fun and Showtime Ever After was no exception. The main characters carried off their parts well and Daniel Maskell made a gorgeously laconic narrator.

Outstanding among the costumes were Stuart Honey's Pinocchio (long nose included) and Sasha Robaczynski and companions' frog outfits. The music, in the safe hands of Jevan Johnson Booth, Nic Cope, Nick Leonard and Anthony Hardwicke, ranged from The Mikado (three little maids became three little pigs) to the more up-to-date via South Pacific and Mary Poppins, all performed with gusto and good slick movement from a cast who know how to put over a number.

Unfortunately several of those who had the odd line to sing were not projecting their voices enough and too often lines were lost. No problems in such cameo spots as the excellent Jeremy Mann as the magic mirror, or Jon Lovell proudly pronouncing I AmAdolpho and the Diva's Lament was a good choice of song for Wicked Witch (Jeannette Maskell).

Holly Lucas looked a bit lonely standing at the back of the hall and I suspect that she would have loved to be on the stage herself, good actress as she is. Nevertheless, she can congratulate herself on coming up with a lively, colourful entertainment which all those taking part obviously thoroughly enjoyed, as did the audience.

CAROLINE FRANKLIN