

Sleeping Beauty Review

The Rylance Theatre, Ashford

Pantomime season is again in full swing at the Rylance Theatre, Ashford this Christmas. Blue Phoenix Productions have come up with a spectacular family pantomime that simply rips along and keeps everyone entertained. With another winning script the audience are treated to a non-stop action-packed show, full of plenty of jokes and toe tapping musical numbers.

The casting is simply superb. Paul Ketley (who also writes and directs) returns as Ashford's very own pantomime dame, this year as "Nanny Nora", his timing and stage presence is simply a master class in everything a pantomime dame should be. He is joined by the equally talented Charley Byrne as "Jingles the Jester" and the pair have the audience in stitches from beginning to end.

The good and evil, Stephanie Middleton as "Fairy Fortywinks" and Rob Hancox as "Carabosse" make an excellent pairing, bringing an element of dark and light to proceedings, with the audience cheering and booing throughout. Both demonstrate excellent vocal ability, especially in their rendition of "Hit The Road Jack".

The cast is completed by Holly Harvey as "Princess Aurora" and Callum Rumsey as "Prince Henry" who work incredibly well together and their musical numbers are outstanding.

A special mention must also be made of the local children who appear as the ensemble, it is great to see such young talent from the local area.

The whole production sparkles, the set design and costumes by Jill Williams are worthy of any west end stage. The sound and lighting design are also outstanding and really enhance the show.

There are so many moments in this production that stand out, almost too many to mention, but the dragon at the end of act one is a theatrical masterpiece and the twelve days of Christmas routine had the audience in absolute fits of laughter. Ashford truly does have its own spectacular family pantomime to be proud of and one that rivals the productions at the bigger theatres.

Sleeping Beauty runs at the Rylance Theatre, which is in the grounds of Towers School, until the 3rd of January 2026, so be sure not to miss this fantastic Christmas treat for all the family. Tickets can be booked online at www.ashfordpantomime.co.uk or by calling the box office on 01233 367399.

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