**SHREK THE MUSICAL**

**BURTON MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY**

Wednesday 23 February 2022

Bringing the hugely successful Dreamworks Oscar winning family favorite movie Shrek to the stage is no mean feat, I sat amazed as the iconic storybook characters came to life. The book and lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire, with music by Jeanine Tesori.

Clever bittersweet lyrics from the first opening notes continued throughout the rest of this fabulous larger than life show. The casting of which was perfect.

Shrek – Brad Hambleton gave a stoic stella performance, great accent and stage presence, his interaction with the rest of the cast was totally authentic.

Donkey – A total gem of a role, Jonny Salt was superb as the annoyingly loveable gregarious lifeforce that is Shrek’s best and only friend. A noble steed indeed. That’ll do Donkey.

Lord Farquaad – Ollie Last, physically the hardest role to master convincingly (his poor knees). Nasty, narcissistic, needy, conniving are his good points, Ollie did it with absolute aplomb. Well done

Jess Skinner – Princes Fiona, spunky, grouchy, loving; a total equal for the bantering Shrek and Donkey. The nuances and subtleties she brought to the stage, switching between personalities was utterly joyous. Great singing voice as well. Stunning performance.

I loved the *I think I Got You Beat* number. The class of the performers on this number, never missing a beat, staying completely in character throughout, giving such professional performances, all shone

The other numerous Fairy Tale characters were equally very well portrayed. There seemed to be a collective desire to bring the very best out of every aspect of this performance and this goes for everyone involved. Must mention Pinocchio - Jonny Stewart; Dragon – Lauren Brown; Gingy – Rachel Edwards.

Sound and lighting aided the storytelling beautifully to the nth degree. Costumes, props and make-up utterly dazzled.

I loved the Duloc Dancers scene, great movement and choreography in the show courtesy of Dannie Berriman, great to see a tap number in there as well.

Directors Sam Walker and Oly Wright must be congratulated for bringing this spectacular production to the stage, I know this is a team effort but managing the team and giving them the freedom to craft their collective magic is an art in itself. Similarly, David Blackwell, talk about a steady baton; he continues his superlative Musical Directorship marshalling a fine group of musicians and well-rehearsed singers.

The lead roles totally recreated and embodied the beloved characters, I’ve had to send off for the Big Book of Superlatives for this show as I ran out halfway through my review.

Burton Musical Theatre Company should step back collectively and pat one another on the back for the pure excellence and sheer professionalism that every department brought to this production.

Utterly Amazing show. One of the best musicals I’ve seen.

***Alan Bruce***

Regional Representative District 3 – NODA West Midlands