

# British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

## Aladdin

David Lee

Pantoni Pantomimes

Empire Theatre, Consett

(2010)

The pavements of Consett were coated with ice, surrounding this beautiful theatre with a frozen moat, so lethal I saw at least four people fall on the way to see *Aladdin*. There was something a bit frozen on the inside too, the production appeared to be stuck in a time warp of tired scenery and old jokes, a few about Chris Quintens dead friends from *Coronation Street* showing very bad taste. Quintens Abanazar lacked the villainy of a really good Boo-Hiss baddy and on more than four occasions, he got a very unprofessional fit of the giggles and couldn't speak his lines. In the second half, he was laughing so much he set the rest of the cast off and it was a good five minutes before anyone could carry on.

Thankfully, there was an ample supply of other amazing actors to make some magic. Emma Louise Bennet directs and plays the Slave of The Ring with enough fizz to light up a host of fireworks. Pee Wee Price as Aladdins brother, Wishee Washee, was absolutely fabulous with his funny walk; he was pretty agile in the aisles kissing the audience too. The Chinese Policeman, Alex Nicholson, had some extraordinary energy and superb dance moves and the Honey Monster made a very popular genie with the kids. Donald Marshalls camp Widow Twanky had some amazing costumes and he must be the first Twanky to wear his frock above the knee, showing off his rather superb legs. He also got to wear a very famous frock for the finale; a fussy gold Rule-Britania creation worn by a comedy genius, the late Les Dawson. His 18 year old daughter, Charlotte Dawson bravely takes on the lead role of Aladdin. Shes certainly a pretty girl with legs all the way up to her eyebrows, but disappointingly she lacks confidence and experience. She can't act, she doesn't sing and she appeared to be having problems knowing where to put her hands, so she planted them firmly on her hips for most of the show.

Two and a half hours is just too long for a panto and this one is overflowing with glitzy gimmicks with not enough slickness, very little slapstick and virtually no storyline.

*To 2nd January, 2011*

**Reviewer:** [Helen Brown](#)