

Childe Rowland – 19th & 20th October 2018

Childe Rowland is the first joint venture between Stage Door Drama and the Rotherfield Players junior membership and what a pleasure it was to go along to support the production.

The first thing that really impressed me about the production was that it truly was a junior production with the older juniors undertaking some of the key production roles. With the support of Sarah Truelove (founder of Stage Door Drama), Georgie Dolding and Kathryn Metcalf directed an act each of the show and Sophie Baldwin ably stage managed the many scene changes.

We could see the talent of this group of children (aged between 9 and 18) even before the performance started; the clever programme and flyer illustration being designed by another of the juniors Rhiannon Jeffs.

Two contrasting sets provided the back drop for the production moving from a fairy story type vista to a back street alleyway; once again the juniors did the work. Well done all.

The production told the tale of the hero, Childe Rowland, and his journey through the land of Faery to reach his evil opponent the Elfin king and rescue his sister. Throughout we were treated to strong performances from the 17 members of the cast. The thing that struck me most was how well we could hear everyone, congratulations must go to Sarah Truelove for the work she puts in with these children to teach them the technique to do this.

With so many strong performances it would seem wrong to name individuals but there were some moments that particularly struck me:

- The timing of the 3 knights remaining absolutely in sync throughout
- The clever use of comic timing between Merlin, Guinevere and Childe Rowland
- The relationship between the Elf King and his 2 sidekicks
- The Rap in act 2

Sadly the audience was small making it harder for the performers to generate the level of interaction that I'm sure they would have wanted but this did not lessen the enjoyment of the show. I hope this is the first of many such joint ventures.

Kate Organ – October 2018