



# Show Report

Sparks Dramatic Society

## Snow White

5 December 2025

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Snow White
SOCIETY	Sparks Dramatic Society
VENUE	Hyde Festival Theatre
GENRE	Pantomime
CAST SIZE	54
DIRECTOR	Daniel Oliver-Grant
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Kat Rawling
CHOREOGRAPHER	Sue Bradbury
ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER	Erin Bradbury
WRITER	Steven Oliver-Grant
AUDITION ARTISTIC ADVISOR	Katy Thomason-Stewart
DANCE CAPTAINS	Amanda Todd, Hollie Knowles
STAGE MANAGER	Charlie Egner
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Joe Bradbury
STAGE RUNNER	Sue Bradbury
TECHNICAL MANAGER	Daniel Oliver-Grant
BACKSTAGE TECHNICIAN	Martin Webber
LIGHTING DESIGN	Steven Oliver-Grant
LIGHTING OPERATOR	James Bradbury
SOUND ASSISTANT	Kelly Holder
PYROTECHNICIAN/SPECIAL FX	Daniel Oliver-Grant
SET CONSTRUCTION LEADER	Martin Webber
SET CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANT	Gary Thomas
SET DESIGN LEADER	Kelly Holder
SET DESIGN ASSISTED BY	Jemma Pattison, Brenda Starkey, Dave Ayre, Jem Marshall-Ayre, Racheal Coogan, Steven Oliver-Grant, Tom Dodd, SDS Members, Tameside College Carpentry & Joinery Department
PROPERTIES	Charlie Egner, Jem Marshall-Ayre, Jemma Pattison, Katy Thomason-Stewart, Roger Bigg, Kimberley Ross, El Pomfret
TRANSPORT	Roger Bigg, Stuart Grant
ARTWORK & PROGRAMME DESIGN	Dave Ayre
MARKETING AND COMMS	Jem Marshall-Ayre
PHOTOGRAPHY	Butterfly B Photography
HEAD OF WARDROBE	Jayne Webber, Nicky Houghton, Jemma Pattison

<b>WARDROBE ASSISTED BY</b>	Hellena Marsden, Karen Matthews, Tom Dodd, Niamh O’Neill, Ange Collier
<b>HAIR &amp; MAKE UP DESIGNER</b>	Mia Grant
<b>HEAD CHAPERONE</b>	Jayne Webber
<b>CHAPERONES</b>	Ste Oliver-Grant, Kelly Holder, Cheryl Weston, Clare Pascoe, Emily Hill, Hannah Ashcroft, Hellena Marsden, Joanne Buckley, Karen Matthews, Lee Mottershead, Lisa Frain, Naomi Evans, Nicky Houghton, Paula Cope
<b>FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGERS</b>	Daniel Cocker, Helen Bowden
<b>FRONT OF HOUSE</b>	Cath Frazer, Sally Morgan, Hyde Festival Theatre Volunteers
<b>BAR TEAM LEADER</b>	Davey Thompson
<b>TICKETS &amp; BOX OFFICE</b>	Sparks Theatre Management
<b>THEATRE DECORATION</b>	Jem Marshall-Ayre

## CAST LIST

<b>Snow White</b>	Racheal Coogan
<b>Prince Percy</b>	Jack Evans
<b>Evil Queen</b>	Amber Kennerley
<b>Fairy Mary</b>	Lily-Sue Thomas
<b>Dame Daphne</b>	Scott Lees
<b>Billy</b>	Tom Dodd
<b>Betty</b>	Erin Bradbury
<b>Brandon</b>	Adam Carter
<b>Duncan the Duck</b>	Jem Marshall-Ayre
<b>The Magic Mirror</b>	Stephen Bailey
<b>Rickay The Rat (Voice)</b>	Tom Cassell
<b>Rickay The Rat (Puppeteer)</b>	Joe Bradbury
<b>Grouchie</b>	Alexa Mottershead
<b>Gpee</b>	Ellen-Ann Calvert
<b>Moanie</b>	Cece Hashmi
<b>Lazie</b>	Eirin Waddington
<b>Biddie</b>	Millie Holder
<b>Shortie</b>	Willow Marsden
<b>Giddie</b>	Darcey Evans

## JUNIOR ENSEMBLE

Ariella Ashcroft  
Aubrey Mottershead  
Cobe Smith  
Georgia Ricketts  
Harper Rawlinson  
Isla O'Connor  
Niamh O'Brien  
Phoebe Cope  
Phoebe Woodhead  
Poppy Parsonage

## SENIOR ENSEMBLE

Aria Jordan  
Erin Walker  
Isabelle Holgate  
Olivia Parker

## ADULT ENSEMBLE

El Pomfret  
Kimberley Ross  
Melissa Mottershead  
Olivia White

## INTERMEDIATE DANCERS

Alana McCarthy  
Eliza Siddall  
Grace Rawlinson  
Lily Wood  
Maisie Lomas  
Millie Weston  
Neve Douglas

## SENIOR DANCERS

Annie Hampson  
Ava Brett  
Caitlin McCarthy  
Layla Pattison  
Maddy Spence  
Maya Laycock  
Sophie Oldham

## ADULT DANCERS

Amanda Todd  
Hollie Knowles  
Lisa Oldham

DATE OF PERFORMANCE	Friday 5th December 2025
DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	Sunday 7th December 2025
ADJUDICATOR ID	NSA1003
NSA LOGO ON POSTER	No - but updated on Socials
NSA IN PROGRAMME	Yes
PROGRAMME CLASS	Best Original Design

## THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT:

1689

STRONGEST ELEMENTS

### Creative, Intelligent Direction

- Felt like a big production that would not have been out of place on a larger stage. **Daniel Oliver-Grant**'s vision of a pantomime that blended elements of musical theatre as well as the more traditional panto tropes helped give it a grandiose quality that I much appreciated.

### Family Spectacle with great characters and good pacing

- The entire show skipped along at just the right pace, and there was never a time when it felt that a scene dragged or was included to fill a gap.

### Powerful Performances

- **Amber Kennerley**: Vocally adept and compelling, she was one of the stars of the cast.
- **Tom Dodd**: Tom was the focus of the audience's attention with perfect comic timing that felt natural and never forced. A joy to watch.
- **Jem Marshall-Ayre**: A less assured player would not have had the ability to make the halcyon Duncan feel as believable as Jem managed to achieve and her appearance was a highlight of the pantomime.

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I must admit, reviewing a pantomime is not something I ever expected to do. As a child, I never quite connected with the broad humour or the familiar 'he's behind you' calls, and pantomimes never really captured my imagination. Yet returning to the genre now feels a bit like revisiting an old story with fresh eyes. With a mix of curiosity and apprehension, I attended Sparks Dramatic Society's production of Snow White at Hyde Festival Theatre. Could this festive performance finally change my mind about pantomimes? That, we shall see.

I have never been to the Hyde Festival Theatre, but I thought it a lovely venue to host a production aimed at families. All the Front of House staff were attentive and helpful, at one point dealing with a problem during the evening without anyone else noticing. **Sue Bradbury** was a lovely host who warmly welcomed me and answered questions about the show's production cast and crew. She also made an unexpected appearance as a rat during one of the traditional scenes where characters play to the audience, gaining a traditional "he's behind you" for her effort! She also arranged for me to meet the cast after the show which was a nice touch.

Snow White – The Family Pantomime was conceived and written by **Steven Oliver-Grant** and follows the traditional story of the famous Brother's Grimm fairytale. All the usual elements were present from the Princess and her Prince, the Wicked Queen and Fairy, Seven dwarves and Magic Mirror and of course the Panto Dame!

The Director, **Daniel Oliver-Grant**, commented in his programme notes that this was Sparks' biggest show to date in terms of the size of the cast, over fifty performers. He also alluded to it being their most ambitious yet and I would certainly agree with that; it felt like a big production that would not have been out of place on a larger stage. His vision of a pantomime that blended elements of musical theatre as well as the more traditional panto tropes helped give it a grandiose quality that I much appreciated.

It began with a traditional opening of a musical dance number with most of the cast on stage, including the ensemble and dancers. A nice touch was having some of the dancers in the aisles with the audience, which gave the impression of further increasing the stage space. The stage was vibrant and colourful with lots of detail. All the crew are volunteers, and everyone involved in its design, led by **Kelly Holder**, and construction, led by **Martin Webber**, should be commended. I would also add that there were numerous set changes throughout the production, all of which were seamless and with hardly any 'blackouts', a pet hate.

The ensemble harmonies were excellent from start to finish and I would commend the Musical Director **Kat Rawling** for the blend of voices. I also thought the choice of songs used was particularly effective, there was something for everyone, and especially this 80s loving critic who enjoyed the songs from that decade immensely!

The dancers never let their energy levels drop and were always together with no timing issues. I would have liked to have seen more imaginative choreography as this would have lifted the dancing to another level – something to consider for a future show.

We are first introduced to Snow White, played by **Racheal Coogan** in the opening number. Racheal played the lead with aplomb. She had a strong vocal with an impressive range, good interaction with the other characters when on stage and crucially for a pantomime, the audience too. I would have liked to see her use more varied facial expressions, which would have cemented our understanding of the character.

Playing opposite Racheal, **Jack Evans** gave a solid performance as Prince Percy. Again, a strong vocal and interaction with other characters when on stage was his strength, but as with Snow White, I would have loved to see Jack getting more into character. It did feel at times that the two main leads were playing their characters more as a traditional musical rather than as a pantomime, which for me was no bad thing, but some may have felt did not fit with the rest of the performances.

If the two leads were not 'wholly panto' this observation is not something that could be levelled at **Amber Kennerley**, playing our villain, the Evil Queen. She commanded the stage whenever present, crucially maintaining her character completely and handled the inevitable audience boos and hisses magnificently. Vocally adept and compelling, she was one of the stars of the cast.

The Wicked Queen was supported by her Oracles played by **El Pomfret**, **Kimberley Ross** and **Melissa Mottershead**. All three offered good performances with El's singing being the best of the three.

**Lily-Sue** played our Fairy of the tale, Fairy Mary, and despite being one of the younger cast members, met the challenge superbly. She was handed a difficult role that required her to deliver longer monologues whilst often being the only character on stage and the focus of the audience's attention. Many an older, more experienced performer may have struggled with the demands this presented, but Lily-Sue was never phased and always kept her diction clear and authentic. One to watch in the future.

Our Panto Dame – Daphne, played by **Scott Lees**, was quintessentially 'panto.' His experience on stage was clear from his characterisation, playing up to and with the audience, and with his support of and interaction with the other characters whenever on stage. The audience took to him at once and he was clearly one of the stars of the show. Occasionally, Scott needed to ad-lib, as is the nature of the role, and his ability to do so was clear. There was the odd moment when this may have been due to the missing of an actual line, which was the only downside.

Our other comic character was Billy played by **Tom Dodd**. Though new to Sparks Dramatic Society, Tom's experience from previous shows was evident in the confidence and skill he brought to the stage. He is a natural talent and as with Amber, maintained the persona of Billy from start to finish. Whenever on stage, Tom was the focus of the audience's attention with perfect comic timing that felt natural and never forced. A joy to watch.

A special mention must go to **Jem Marshall-Ayre** who played Duncan the Duck. Ignoring the stamina required to don the duck costume for the entire show, a feat in itself. Jem executed one of the most difficult roles, requiring her to display all her character's thoughts and feelings through physical performance alone. No facial expression, speech or singing was possible, just restricted movement in an oversized costume with the occasional quack thrown in for good measure. A less assured player would not have had the ability to make the halcyon Duncan feel as believable as Jem managed to achieve and her appearance was a highlight of the pantomime.

Our two guards, or was the Evil Queen just using them as cleaners? Were a lovely duo that were well suited to the roles and played well together. **Adam Carter** (Brandon) drew inspiration from Frank Spencer and other similar physical comedians and was a touch stronger in his performance than **Erin Bradbury** (who played Betty). Both were always acting whenever on stage, including many scenes where they had to be seen to be doing things on stage, whilst others were delivering lines.

As well as an effective use of pyrotechnics, including fire and explosions, the Director made much of the famous Mirror of the story, using it to tremendous effect with **Stephen Bailey** being the bearer of both good and bad news to the company on stage. Along with the Mirror, there was the welcome return of Rickay the Rat. Voiced perfectly by **Tom Cassell** with puppetry by **Joe Bradbury**, the two were always in sync with each other and Rickay was a pleasing addition to the story.

While we are discussing effects and technical wizardry, on the downside, there were occasional sound issues with muffled moments from the microphones, it didn't detract from the overall performance however and I suspect the audience were unaware. On a much more positive note, I must give recognition to **Ste Oliver-Grant** for the lighting design and **James Bradbury** for their operation. They were especially effective, most notably in a section when the Fairy and Evil Queen were at either side of the stage with laser like lights streaming between them – a mesmerising moment.

Snow White would not be complete without her seven dwarves, and they were played capably by seven of the younger cast members all displaying great comic timing. Two of the actors merit a particular mention. **Millie Holder** had good physicality and **Alexa Mottershead** had tremendous stage presence.

The Woodland scene where Snow White meets a variety of woodland creatures introduced us to the youngest members of the cast. Playing a variety of animals, they were confident for such young performers.

The entire show skipped along at just the right pace, and there was never a time when it felt that a scene dragged or was included to fill a gap. The performance ended as it began with a rousing closing finale encompassing the entire cast and ticker tape for the audience, who all clearly had a wonderfully enjoyable evening.

So, did Snow White – The Family Pantomime change the mind of this panto sceptic? No, I still find the traditional version of the tried and tested formula irritating at best. Did I leave the Hyde Festival Theatre with a smile on my face? Yes! To the credit of the company absolutely, because this version cleverly walked the line between pantomime and musical and left me with a warm glow and an appreciation of talented, lovely people delivering a fantastic experience. Thank you so much to Sparks Dramatic Society for your hospitality and we cannot wait to see what else you have in store in the future.

Merry Christmas!

## PHOTOGRAPHS









## PROGRAMME

A vibrant poster for the Snow White Souvenir Programme. The background is a deep blue with a starry, magical atmosphere. In the center, a hand with dark blue nail polish holds a glowing red apple. The apple is positioned behind the large, golden, 3D letters of the title 'SNOW WHITE'. The words 'The Family Pantomime' are written in a white, cursive font across the bottom of the title. Below the title, the words 'SOUVENIR PROGRAMME' are written in large, bold, golden letters. At the bottom, the dates '30th NOVEMBER and 2nd - 6th DECEMBER 2025' are displayed in large, bold, golden letters. The poster includes logos for Sparks Dramatic Society, Hyde Festival Theatre, NODA, and Northern Stage Awards.

Sparks Dramatic Society

HYDE Festival THEATRE

# SNOW WHITE

*The Family Pantomime*

## SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

### 30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER and 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025

Written by Steven Oliver-Grant  
by arrangement with ✓ THEATRE SCRIPTS

Directed by Daniel Oliver-Grant

Hyde Festival Theatre | Corporation Street | Hyde | SK14 1AB

NODA For every stage

NORTHERN STAGE AWARDS