



# Show Report

South Manchester AOS

## Mother Goose

21 November 2025

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Mother Goose
SOCIETY	South Manchester AOS
VENUE	Z-arts Theatre
GENRE	Pantomime
CAST SIZE	26
DIRECTOR	Jon Gardner
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Tom Guest
CHOREOGRAPHER	Beth Abram
WRITER	Kevin Proctor
DANCE CAPTAIN	Faye Allison
SCENERY ARTIST	Steph Niland & Team
SET CONSTRUCTION	Ethan Osborn & Dave Bamford
CLOTH HIRE	Proscenium Hire & Thoroughly Theatre
LIGHTING DESIGN & OPERATION	Ethan Osborn
SOUND	John Redfern
PROPS	Lucy Strong
COSTUMES	Charades Theatrical
PHOTOGRAPHER	Derek Stuart-Cole
PROGRAMME	Kallum Edwards
PRODUCTION MANAGERS	Kevin Proctor & Andy McNicholas
STAGE MANAGER	Lucy Strong
CREW	Owen Thornton & Members
Z-ARTS TECH	Jason Hall & Steve Curtis
HOUSE MANAGER	Andy McNicholas

## CAST LIST

Judy Goose	Kevin Proctor
Gilbert Goose	Tom Guest
Terrabelle	Christina Pearson
Priscilla	Freia Reidel-Fisher
Silly Billy Goose	Kallum Edwards
Mary Contrary	Rosie Plummer
Fairy Quackers	Ryan Brown
Queen Ida	Deborah Lowe

## ENSEMBLE

Faye Allison  
Hayley Atkinson  
Sally Barber  
Sarah Bartlett  
Helen Blythe  
Ryan Brown  
Joseph Butcher  
Liam Dodd  
Sarah Gallagher  
Nicola Gardner  
Sarah James  
Deborah Lowe  
Jess McEvoy  
George Merryweather  
Anthony Poole  
Jess Power  
Sophia Siddiqui  
David Steggles

DATE OF PERFORMANCE	Friday 21st November 2025
DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	Sunday 23rd November 2025
ADJUDICATOR ID	NSA1004
NSA LOGO ON POSTER	Yes
NSA IN PROGRAMME	Yes
PROGRAMME CLASS	Best Original Design

## THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT

1888

STRONGEST ELEMENTS

### Powerful Performances

- Synchronicity within the Ensemble, Who performed with consistent energy, cohesion and focused movement, producing unified vocals and balanced harmonies. Their clear commitment to every number added vibrancy and strength to the overall production.

### Sound and Lighting

- The sound and Lighting teams worked very efficiently together to enhance the atmosphere and support effective storytelling. Lighting choices, including colours and focus chosen, were well designed, helping to enhance key elements of the show, while sound cues and microphone levels ensured consistent clarity.

### Musical Choices

- The choices of music throughout the production were well matched to the cast's voices and complimented the storyline very well. The pantomime offered a wide variety of musical styles from different time periods, there truly was something for everyone to enjoy.

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With this being my first time attending a South Manchester AOS production, I was excited to see what the evening had in store. When my guest and I arrived, we were warmly greeted by **Andy McNicholas** who was the House Manager and one of the Production Managers for the society. He informed us that the show had a run time of just under three hours and was long because they know what their audience love and wanted to feature lots of elements that their demographic desires and expects from their shows - which is an advantage of using an in-house script, which was cleverly written by **Kevin Proctor**.

In this production of Mother Goose, the traditional tale was comedically updated and modernised with lively musical numbers and playful jokes throughout. As the tale unfolded, this production delivered a laugh-out-loud cast, accompanied by an impressive high energy ensemble.

The pantomime began with a classic stage right entrance from Fairy Quackers, played by **Ryan Brown**. His stage presence was confident and inviting from the very start, and he established an immediate connection with audience members through his rhythmic story telling and well-judged comedic timing. His adult-leaning humour was well delivered throughout, so that it was enjoyable for all ages. His ability to respond quickly and playfully in the moment, particularly when ad-libbing during a scene change, added an extra layer of spontaneity and fun to his character and the overall atmosphere of the show.

The character of Judy Goose was played by **Kevin Proctor**, also the script writer. He served as the anchor of this dame-led show, with reliable comic timing and well-maintained accent throughout. His opening monologue allowed him to quickly read the audience, establishing his character with strong diction, physicality and movement around the stage. His willingness to participate consistently with the audience presented a confidently humorous character in command of both pace and tone.

Judy was a featured vocalist in a range of musical numbers, including a Broadway medley which conveyed the character's emotional truth, in her dream to be a star, to come through with clarity and charm. Kevin's commitment to the role extended into the smaller, improvised moments as well, and his playful responsiveness often lifted the energy in the room. His portrayal brought cohesion to the production, grounding the story while adding a distinctive personality that enriched the show's overall character.

**Tom Guest** as Gilbert Goose brought an engaging and lovable character and had a strong stage presence. The well-projected character had a playful, uxorious devotion to Judy and his well-meaning but hopeless characterisation complimented Judy's dame well, particularly within their fitting rendition of 'With you on my arm' from *La Cage aux Folles* which gave the character a charming heart. Tom's vocal variety was strong, with solo performances such as 'Oh, Judy!' showcasing his voice well. I was impressed with his ability to accompany the '12 days of Christmas' song on the piano, especially with the demanding comic timing and chaotic nature of the scene.

Terrabelle was the villain of this story, played by **Christina Pearson**. She made a confident entrance at the start of the show and her projection, diction and physical mannerisms were well-focused, which gave a clear sense of the villain's intentions within the story. Her performance of 'If You Want Perfection' from *Death Becomes Her* was a highlight of her performance, showcasing strong vocals and a fully villainised character which revealed how much presence she could bring to the role. I would have liked to see even more of this character detail threaded throughout the performance, though the foundations were solid and she brought energy and commitment when interacting with the audience.

The pivotal role of Priscilla the Goose was played by **Freia Reidel-Fisher**, who delivered a very strong vocal performance in the production. Her singing was confident, controlled and well-supported. Her musical numbers, including a stand-out performance of 'Where I Wanna Be' from Boop The Musical, landed effectively with the audience. She also had distinctive physicality, using light-footed movement across the whole stage to portray the Goose's playful energy. Paired with strong facial expressions, including her delightfully gormless smile, her character was well-rounded and defined. Freia's reactive acting was another notable asset of her performance, as she stayed fully immersed in every scene by responding with effective reactions that strengthened her overall stage presence even further.

Silly Billy Goose and Mary Contrary, played by **Kallum Edwards** and **Rosie Plummer** created an engaging subplot, playing on Mary's initial 'Mario' disguise and Billy's confusion, which led to several warm, humorous moments together. Kallum's Silly Billy character was introduced with a confident monologue and an effective call-and-response with the audience to create an immediate connection. His mannerisms, tone and comic-timing were strong and I felt he brought even more energy as he grew into his character throughout the show. Rosie's Mary Contrary offered a gentle, understated presence to the show with a solid vocal performance and clear but quiet diction and characterisation which brought a softer contrast to the broader comedy. With that foundation, there is room for her to explore even more definition in future roles, but her contributions added a gentle humour to the storyline.

The role of Queen Ida, portrayed by **Deborah Lowe**, was small but left a memorable impression. She was featured in the last few scenes of the show, allowing the storyline to come together nicely. She held a distinctive accent, handling the old-English dialogue with assurance, even within her rendition of 'Born This Way', which was delivered with stylistic consistency. Her reactive acting supported her character, and there was a notable moment when she echoed the broader accents of the other cast members, which added an extra layer of humour to her characterisation.

A real highlight of this production for me was the commitment that came from the **ensemble**. They performed with consistent energy and cohesion in every musical number and scene they appeared in, demonstrating strong reactive acting to the dialogue around them, secure timing, focused movement and confident vocals throughout. Their harmonies were well-balanced, and it was clear that every member was fully participating in each musical number, which created a unified and engaging sound which supported solo vocalists extremely well. The choreography was delivered with clarity, energy and commitment, and the overall standard of dancing was notably high, contributing significantly to the strength and vibrancy of the overall production.

The musical director **Tom Guest**, who also played the role of Gilbert Goose. It was evident that he had put in a lot of hard work and effort to create a shaped and highly balanced sound that allowed both ensemble and individual vocals to shine. His work provided a reliable foundation for the show and contributed positively to the overall flow and coherence of each number.

Choreography by **Beth Abram**, supported by Dance Captain **Faye Allison** contributed a notably strong and engaging element to the production. Her routines were thoughtfully crafted, offering the whole cast opportunities to showcase their technical skills while still feeling well-suited to everyone and their abilities. The movement added real vibrancy to the larger numbers, giving them shape, lift, and a sense of fun that the cast embraced with clear enthusiasm. The dancers' commitment reflected the clarity of her vision, and the choreography played a key role in giving the production its lively, cohesive rhythm. They were synchronised numbers and the timing was very accurate.

The costumes, sourced from **Charades Theatrical** were well fitted and suited to the characters, which contributed positively to a visually appealing and colourful overall look for the production. I was particularly impressed by the full-company quick change into silver and white for the finale, which created a unified stage picture and added a pleasing sense of closure to the evening. While the designs were generally effective, I felt that some hats did occasionally overshadow facial expressions and there were moments where a slightly bolder approach to makeup, particularly for Dame Judy, would have helped prevent features from being softened by the stage lighting. Dame Judy wore retro glasses for most of the show which covered some of Kevin's face and make up so I would have liked to have seen the use larger and bolder. Even so, the costume team achieved a consistent and classic aesthetic that enhanced the production throughout and decisions were clearly thought out, down to Priscilla's orange crocs as her goose feet.

The set design by Scenery Artist **Steph Niland and team** took a stripped back approach with scenery, allowing the performers to take visual focus. The addition of the colourfully decorated Goose house was a nice touch, creating opportunities for cast members to aid **Owen Thornton** and the crew in quick scene changes. The mid stage cloth allowed more complex scene changes to occur whilst actors kept the pace of the show, although I felt it was slightly distracting at times as audience members could see the set team behind the cloth.

One particularly humorous moment was during the '12 days of Christmas' song which included a hilarious appearance from some members of the crew. Props by **Lucy Strong**, including the crucial golden eggs and the addition of water guns that were playfully used with the audience, were purposefully chosen and added to the characters and storyline. The addition of the geese puppets added an element of fun for the younger audience members to enjoy.

Lighting by **Ethan Osborn** delivered a purposeful and impressive design which supported the story. Low smoke and vertical foggers were used effectively, particularly noted in every Fairy and Villain entrance which were complimented by green and pink lights to enhance the atmosphere. The distinct colour choices added to the whimsical nature of the pantomime, paired with well-timed lightning cues at the mention of villainous Old Mother Hubbard. Well-paced spotlights also ensured key moments were engaging and focused. The unexpected full blackout during the '12 days of Christmas' song added an extra layer of humour to an already classic and comical scene in the pantomime.

Lighting was well accompanied by **John Redfern** on sound. Every sound cue was on time and was thoughtfully crafted to add emotional texture to each scene. The musical numbers were well supported, with microphones carefully adjusted and balanced so performers could be clearly heard without being overpowered. While a sound effect during the set's cloth change would have been a nice addition, the overall sound design remained strong and effective throughout the performance.

The Front Of House team were attentive and friendly throughout the whole evening, ensuring that audience members could have a positive experience. They were particularly attentive when monitoring anyone filming during the production, and I appreciated how they handled any issues quickly and discretely without disrupting the atmosphere for other members of the audience. Their professionalism contributed to a welcoming environment from start to finish.

In summary, Mother Goose was a highly enjoyable pantomime that delivered entertainment in abundance while showcasing a number of strong individual performances. I would like to thank South Manchester AOS for a welcome evening of theatre and Andy for his hospitality. The company created a warm, festive atmosphere, and it was a pleasure to see the company engaging so confidently with the essentials of panto and their demographic. I look forward to having the pleasure of seeing further work from this team.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

**Mother Goose**

19th - 22nd November 2025

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www.smaos.org.uk      www.z-arts.org

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## PROGRAMME

