



Show Report

Sparks Dramatic Society

Rumpel4Skin

10 December 2025

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Rumpel4Skin
SOCIETY	Sparks Dramatic Society
VENUE	Hyde Festival Theatre
GENRE	Pantomime
CAST SIZE	23
DIRECTOR	Daniel Oliver-Grant
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Kat Rawling
CHOREOGRAPHER	Sue Bradbury
WRITER	Steven Oliver-Grant
LYRICS	Anthony Freeman
PIANIST	Kat Rawling
AUDITION ARTISTIC ADVISOR	Katy Thomason-Stewart
DANCE CAPTAINS	Amanda Todd, Hollie Knowles
STAGE MANAGER	Claire-Louise Brown
STAGE CREW	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
PROJECTION SUPPORT	Adam Carter
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, Ste Oliver-Grant, Andy Greenwood, Tom Dodd, Andrew Grogan, 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
MAKE UP	Lottie Popay
HEAD OF WARDROBE	Jayne Webber, Nicky Houghton, Jemma Pattison
WARDROBE ASSISTED BY	Hellena Marsden, Karen Matthews, Tom Dodd, Niamh O'Neill, Ange Collier
FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGER	Daniel Cocker
FRONT OF HOUSE	Cath Frazer, Sally Morgan, Hyde Festival Theatre Volunteers
BAR TEAM LEADER	Davey Thompson
TICKETS & BOX OFFICE	Sparks Theatre Management
THEATRE DECORATION	Jem Marshall-Ayre

CAST LIST

Rumpelforeskin	Adam Carter
Dame Penny Trate	Tony Scott George
Princess Bella Donner	Melissa Mottershead
Prince Claude	Jem Marshall-Ayre
Fairy Flutters	Kimberley Ross
Queen Egot Chlamydia	Lee Mottershead
Smegma	Daniel Cope
Dirty Donner	Katy Thomason-Stewart
Red Rides it Good	Racheal Coogan
Pissed in Boots	Andrew Grogan
Master Bates	Andy Greenwood
Knots Trate	El Pomfret
Paco the Parrot	Jemma Pattison
Mouldylocks	Emily Johnson
Margaret Joan	Julie Chetwyn

DANCERS

	Amanda Todd
	Hollie Knowles
	Kat Rawling
	Leah Owens-Brown
	Lisa Oldham
	Phoebe Barton
	Sarah White
	Sue Bradbury

DATE OF PERFORMANCE	Thursday 11th December 2025
DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	Friday 12th December 2025
ADJUDICATOR ID	NSA1002
NSA LOGO ON POSTER	No - but updated on Socials
NSA IN PROGRAMME	Yes
PROGRAMME CLASS	Best Original Design

THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT

2336

STRONGEST ELEMENTS

Powerful Performances

- **Adam Carter** as Rumpel4skin, displayed a physically relentless and vocally assured performance, fully committed and central to the success of the production.

- **Tony Scott George** as Dame Penny Trate gave a masterclass in Dame performance, combining impeccable comic timing, audience rapport, and total stage authority.

Bold, Intelligent Direction and Structure

- Daniel Oliver-Grant's direction was confident and well structured, maintaining strong pace, clarity, safety, and energy throughout the production.

Striking and Cohesive Design Choices

- The set design was vibrant and cohesive, effectively supporting the storytelling and enhancing the visual world of the pantomime.

I had the pleasure of adjudicating Sparks Dramatic Society's fourth annual adult pantomime, Rumpel4skin, a production that takes the familiar fairytale of Rumpelstiltskin and gleefully drags it into the gutter – with enthusiasm. Directed by **Daniel Oliver-Grant** and written by **Steven Oliver-Grant**, this was always going to be an evening that tested both my composure and innocence. Having encountered Steven's wonderfully warped imagination in previous adult pantomimes, and after being forewarned by marketing mastermind **Jem Marshall-Ayre** on facebook that this year's offering would be "bigger and dirtier than ever", I approached the performance with a mix of excitement and mild apprehension. What followed was a riotous, no-holds-barred production that had the audience belly laughing from start to finish – and left me having seen enough bare bums to comfortably last a lifetime.

Taking on one of the most demanding roles of the evening was **Adam Carter** as Rumpel4skin. Adam's physicality was exceptionally strong throughout, scurrying around the stage with relentless energy – at times almost Gollum-like – which was no small feat given the stamina required for the role. His movement never dropped, and his commitment to the character was unwavering from start to finish. Adam's singing was confident, and he played comfortably with the audience, visibly at ease with both the character and adult humour. Crucially, he was uncomfortable to watch, which is exactly what the role demands. Having seen him as a far more innocent character in Snow White, I wasn't sure what to expect – but Adam more than rose to the challenge and fully delivered.

Next up was Rumpel4skin's sidekick, Smegma – and if the name alone doesn't warn you, the character certainly does. Played by **Daniel Cope**, this was a gloriously grotesque creation, pitched perfectly for an adult pantomime. Daniel delivered the role with confidence, using an intentionally uncomfortable yet highly comic vocal choice that was fully committed to the

character's outrageous nature. His chemistry with Adam was natural, and the pair worked seamlessly together, and much like Adam, Daniel brought a distinctly Gollum-esque quality to the role – or Sméagol, for any Lord of the Rings fans.

Sweeping onto the stage in all her glory was Dame Penny Trate played by **Tony Scott George**. From the very first moment – an entrance that was nothing short of iconic – the audience was in safe(ish) hands. Tony was hilariously assured throughout, showcasing natural comic timing, strong physicality, and an ease with the audience that clearly comes from being a well-seasoned Dame. His commitment to the character never wavered, and his confident ad-libbing with the audience added to the spontaneity and energy of the performance. His 'rap roast' of the cast members had both me and my assistant crying with laughter.

Princess Bella Donna was played by **Melissa Mottershead**, who delivered a confident and sassy performance well suited to the adult pantomime style. Melissa displayed good, secure vocals and was clearly comfortable embracing the character's overly flirtatious nature, which allowed her to play the humour with confidence. On reflection, there were moments where a greater variety of facial expression could have added extra layers to the humour and reaction work, but this barely detracted from an overall assured and engaging performance that suited the tone of the production well.

Adding yet more sparkle to the cast was **Jem Marshall-Ayre** as Prince Claude, who brought an outrageous and unapologetically flirtatious edge to the role. Jem's vocals were assured throughout, and she clearly relished playing with the character and the material. Her comic timing was spot on, with every joke landing cleanly, and she remained fully engaged even when not the focus of the scene. Jem's reactive acting was particularly strong, ensuring Prince Claude was constantly alive on stage and contributing to the humour and momentum of the production.

Fairy Flutters was joyfully played by **Kimberley Ross**, who delivered a highly committed and engaging performance, bringing a splash of sass and mischievous sensuality to the role. Kimberley maintained strong audience connection throughout, frequently making eye contact, which made the character even more engaging and helped the audience pull into the humour. Her characterisation was particularly strong, successfully bringing the traditional pantomime fairy to life with a modern, cheeky twist. At times, allowing the lines a little more space to breathe may have helped certain jokes land even more clearly, as they occasionally felt rushed. That said, this did little to detract from an overall confident, vibrant performance full of energy and personality.

Knots Trate was portrayed with believable, quirky energy, making the character well suited to the adult pantomime style. **El Pomfret** demonstrated good comedic timing throughout, helping the story flow and ensuring the humour consistently landed with the audience. She was clearly comfortable working with the rest of the cast and flourished within the adult humour, with her eccentric characterisation making Knots Trate a fun and engaging presence on stage.

Sharing the stage as Queen Egot Chlamydia and Master Bates were **Lee Mottershead** and **Andy Greenwood**, who formed a strong and well-matched comic duo. Together, they added significantly to the production's dirty comedy, playing off one another with confidence and clear enjoyment of the material. At times, greater projection and clearer diction would have helped ensure all their lines landed as intended, as some dialogue was occasionally lost. That said, their good chemistry and full commitment to the characters kept their scenes energetic and entertaining.

Dirty Donner was played by **Katy Thomason-Stewart**, who, as the programme references, was "popping her adult panto cherry" – and she threw herself into the role with confidence. Katy was constantly active on stage, even in the background, and created a convincing, tough-skinned landlady of the local pub. Her deep vocal choice suited the character well and added to the authority and comedy of the role, resulting in a solid and engaging performance.

Paco the Parrot was puppeteered by **Jem Pattison**, who demonstrated strong puppetry skills throughout, with confident manipulation that matched the dialogue well and kept the character clear and engaging. At times, a more exaggerated or squeakier parrot-style vocal choice could have further heightened the humour and clarity of the character. Nonetheless, Jem's assured handling of the puppet ensured Paco remained a fun addition to the production.

Margaret Joan, a non-speaking role, was portrayed by **Julie Chetwyn**, who proved that words were entirely unnecessary. As the long-suffering servant, her comically slow entrances delivering "cups of tea" became a running gag that consistently delivered the audience. Julie's physicality was highly comedic, and while the character sometimes bridged scenes, she never once felt like a filler. Instead, Margaret Joan became a thoroughly enjoyable and hilarious presence, leaving a lasting impression despite never uttering a word.

Rounding out the supporting cast were Red Rides it Good played by **Rachael Coogan**, Pissed in Boots played by **Andrew Grogan**, and Mouldylocks, played by **Emily Johnson**. Each performer created a clear and committed background character, adding to the overall chaotic energy on stage and enhancing the overall atmosphere of the production. Their collective presence helped fill the world of the pantomime and supported the humour and momentum of the scenes effectively.

The dance ensemble, comprising **Phoebe Barton, Sue Bradbury, Hollie Knowles, Lisa Oldham, Leah Owens-Brown, Kat Rawling, Amanda Todd** and **Sarah White**, performed under the choreography of **Sue Bradbury**. The choreography was clean, confident, and well structured, with all the dancers demonstrating strong ability and commitment. It was clear that Sue's choreography played to the performer's strength, allowing each dancer to shine while maintaining a cohesive and energetic ensemble throughout.

Moving on to the creative team, the production was directed by **Daniel Oliver-Grant**, whose strong direction ensured the show flowed well throughout and kept the stage consistently busy and engaging. The pacing was well judged, and scenes moved smoothly without losing momentum. A particular highlight of direction was the sword fight between Rumpel4skin and Prince Claude, which was thoughtfully choreographed, with cast safety clearly placed at the

forefront while still delivering an exciting and entertaining moment on stage. In addition to directing, Daniel also undertook the role of pyrotechnician and special effects operator, delivering safely executed and precisely timed effects, including loud bangs and low-lying smoke – which enhanced the visual impact of the production.

The pantomime was written by **Steven Oliver-Grant**, and the script delivered everything an adult pantomime should. It retained all the much-loved traditions, the “he’s behind you moments”, the inevitable “oh no we didn’t” audience participation, communal singing, and the full range of classic panto characters – while confidently embracing the adult humour. The balance of tradition and cheekiness was well judged, with the level of innuendo and risqué humour creating an exciting, bold, and thoroughly entertaining show from the start to finish.

Musical direction was provided by **Kat Rawling**, with the production benefitting from well-layered vocals and securely pitched harmony throughout. The musical numbers were confidently delivered, with strong vocals from the principal cast. A strong moment was the final number of the evening, which featured layered lyrics running simultaneously – no easy task to musically direct – yet it was executed with clarity and control, bringing the show to a strong musical conclusion.

Stage management was led by **Claire Louise Brown**, supported by stage crew member **Joe Bradbury**, with scene changes handled swiftly and efficiently throughout the production. Transitions were generally smooth, helping to maintain the pace and flow of the show. There was one brief moment where a mid-stage backdrop was pulled slightly too far over, however this was quickly rectified.

The set was constructed by **Martin Webber** with assistance from **Gary Thomas**, with set design led by **Kelly Holder** and, quite clearly, an army of people behind the scenes. The set was vibrant throughout and made effective use of the side-stage flats, which were colourfully dressed to suit the castle setting. The tavern set was a particular highlight, offering a strong, traditional look that was both well constructed and visually effective, helping to firmly establish the world of the production.

Lighting design was by **Steven Oliver-Grant** and operated by **James Bradbury**, and it was clear that no creative stone was unturned. A wide range of lighting techniques were used, including LED lighting, moving lights, spotlights and flood lighting, all of which added depth, colour and atmosphere to the production. The lighting was very clearly thought out and carefully timed, enhancing the overall visual impact of the show. The only moment that could have been enhanced was a scene set in a bed with a sheet covering to create a silhouette illusion. It would have been more effective with a different lighting choice. Overall, however, the lighting design strongly supported both the comedy and storytelling on stage.

Sound was managed by **Daniel Oliver-Grant**, assisted by **Kelly Holder**, with sound cues delivered accurately throughout a technically demanding show. With a wide range of musical numbers, effects, and precise timing to maintain, the sound team handled the complexity well.

There were a few moments where the music slightly overpowered the microphones, and occasionally a microphone cue was missed; however, these were minor issues within an otherwise well-managed and effective sound operation.

Wardrobe was headed by **Jayne Webber, Nicky Houghton** and **Jemma Pattison**, assisted by **Helena Marsden, Karen Matthews, Tom Dodd, Niamh Calvert** and **Ange Collier**. The costumes were well designed, well fitted, and clearly sat comfortably within the theme of the show. Each character was visually distinct, and the costumes supported both characterisation and comedy. A particular highlight was Fairy Flutters' costume, which added a wonderful burst of colour and flair to the stage.

Props were handled by **Charlie Egner, Jem Marshall-Ayre, Jemma Pattison, Katy Thomason-Stewart, Roger Bigg, Kimberley Ross** and **El Pomfret**, and the team ensured that everything required was in place for the production. The props were well chosen and clearly suited to the style and humour of the show, supporting both the storytelling and the comedy effectively. From traditional pantomime necessities to more adult additions, the prop selection was thoughtfully considered and contributed well to the overall impact of the performance.

Front of House was led by the Hyde Festival Theatre Volunteers team, who were welcoming, friendly, and professional throughout the evening. They ensured the smooth running of the audience experience, including additional safety measures such as bag checks. A particular credit to the team came during a moment of audience participation, where an audience member was escorted safely on and off the stage and back to their seat.

The programme, designed by **Dave Ayre**, was highly entertaining and a joy to read. Packed with inside jokes, interactive elements, and colourful adult-themed content, it perfectly matched the tone of the production. Even after reading it numerous times, there was always something new that caught my eye, making it an engaging and thoughtful addition to the overall audience experience.

Marketing for the production was handled by **Jem Marshall-Ayre**, who successfully built excitement in the lead-up to the show. Through weekly quizzes, cast photos, and rehearsal sneak peeks, she maintained consistent audience engagement, with the tone of the marketing perfectly matching the cheeky nature of the adult pantomime.

Overall, Rumpel4skin was a bold, confident and thoroughly entertaining adult pantomime that fully embraced both the traditions of the genre and its more risqué edge. The production demonstrated a clear understanding of what makes an adult pantomime successful. My thanks to **Sue Bradbury** for hosting us so warmly in the evening, and to **Daniel Oliver-Grant** for taking the time to speak to us and share more about his role within the theatre. It was genuinely lovely to hear him speak so passionately about the venue and the incredible work that goes on behind the scenes. Thank you also to **Steven Oliver-Grant** for talking us through the programme and offering further insight into the production. My congratulations and thanks go to the entire cast and crew for such an enjoyable and entertaining evening. This marks the end of my pantomime adjudication season, and what a way to finish – Merry Christmas to all

involved, and I very much look forward to seeing what Sparks Dramatic Society has in store in the new year.

PHOTOGRAPHS







PROGRAMME

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