

## OVERALL PRODUCTION

'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' never fails to please, C. Day Lewis's magical story with its Christian themes and parodies has a universal appeal. Having directed it on 3 occasions over an unbelievable span of 35 years, but always using the same script, I was very interested to note several differences in your version by Glyn Robbins, particularly for the final scene when we saw the four children as adults, I thought their costuming, crowns and so on was well worth the challenge.

I enjoyed your Production very much on the whole and must congratulate your sound and lighting technician, his effects brought life to the show. The scenery was excellent with memorable props and staging. I loved the wardrobe, the Queen's sleigh, the stone table and Tumnus's home. The snow covered fur trees and falling snow nearly stole the show. The costuming was very good with one or two reservations which I will enlarge on of course. I thought the battle with all the masked monsters, ghouls etc was spectacular and a lot of work had gone into that scene.

The Production, so good on the technical side was uneven at times because detail in the acting and some of the placing for individuals had not been focused. For example the Professor's awkward entrance excluded the audience by him having to play the scene with his back to the audience, I could see the actor was trying to turn towards us which didn't look right either because then he had his back to the children. It would have been simpler for the children to greet him at the top of the staircase and for him to have manoeuvred them round him perhaps 2 on each side facing downstage. Another example was when Lucy was beginning to feel the effects of Mr Tumnus's flute playing surely with yawns stretches etc, rather than a sudden collapse! The Queen's constant reference to 'the others' was a great chance for an actress to vary and emphasise the menacing way she said it each time – opportunities were lost here. The scene in the Beaver house, page 20 directs everyone to rush round looking for Edmund in a panic, this was underplayed and static. The key to actions are often found in the dialogue and it takes time to sift all the dynamics and nuances out of a script.

I wondered why you had cast Peter as a much older boy, this is not a criticism of the actor, but of the image when viewing the children as a group and I haven't seen a Peter in long trousers before!

The reference to mice nibbling away at Aslan's ropes when tied to the stone table could have been done by the very small children from the battle scene with a simple change of headdress, this scene also seemed rather static with a drop in dramatic tension.

The death of the White Witch was likewise underplayed as regards a few blood curdling screams and so on!

I haven't seen the children as adults in a Production before, their dialogue in a sort of Old English gave a new dimension to the performance and their characters didn't seem to 'fit in' in spite of impressive costumes.

The audience response was very appreciative and they had clearly enjoyed the charming story and effects.

### **SET DESIGN**

Apart from the entrance into the children's bedroom at the Professor's house, which was difficult to use, the inset scenes were very effective and the breadth of the stage was well utilised for the scenes in Narnia with the snow and trees and later for the stone table scenes and the thaw.

Props were especially good, Father Xmas's gifts were splendid although obviously left in a 'tangle' after the matinee, he had a difficult task to remove them from the sack in the evening!

The Witch's sleigh and stone table were a tour de force.

### **LIGHTING AND SOUND**

The sound effects were first class. I enjoyed the music for the interval it sustained the cliff hanger mood. The music beforehand was little out of context to set the atmosphere, this is always important. The lighting was very good indeed, there were lots of beautiful images.

### **COSTUMES**

On the whole these were appropriate and in Period for the 40's era. I thought Tumnus should have had sleeves and a bobble hat balanced above his ears, his hooves and ears were excellent. The Queen should have had a crown and I was concerned she had bare feet. Father Xmas's green (opposed to scarlet) outfit did not look theatrical and a contrast to the snow etc in a staged Production. The battle scene looked spectacular with all those masks and so on.

I enjoyed the fur coats and beaver outfits, also the wolves and leopard costumes. Congratulations to the dedicated wardrobe department.