

## **Aladdin Jr. Review**

A Magical Performance with *Aladdin Jr.*

REVIEWED BY EMILY REMAKLUS

When I was first asked to critique *Aladdin Jr.* I was really excited, but then I started to wonder how exactly I was supposed to critique a production that featured kids. Luckily after watching this production I realized I have nothing to worry about with writing a critique, because the show was wonderful. I always find shows that feature teens and children to be impressive. They give up a good part of their summer break from school to put all their attention and dedication into learning lines, dances, songs, and ultimately providing entertainment for the community.

With *Aladdin Jr.* it was obvious a lot of hard work was put into the show. Every single cast member, from the youngest to the oldest, were fully invested in their roles. From the very opening number of "Arabian Nights" I knew the cast was having a fun time. Their energy was contagious and I know I, as I'm sure many others experienced, could not stop smiling during the show.

The set was very well done, and every inch of the stage was used at some point. What I thought was a great choice on Shauna Newbold's part was using the aisle ways to allow for the whole cast to be included in most of the musical numbers. I also thought Newbold did a wonderful job at showcasing various talents that the cast members had. For instance, she had a choreographed tap number for Jafar to show off Bobbi Baranek's skills, incorporated a beautiful ballet duo during "A Whole New World", and added gymnastics during "Prince Ali". These little moments not only added to the mood of the particular scene, but also gave cast members moments to shine.

There were many moments where the cast really shown. Sarah Matlow's solo "One Jump Ahead (Reprise)" was beautifully done, as well as her duo with Jonathan Crawford with "A Whole New World".

Jonathan Crawford's comedic timing was spot on, and his delivery with all his lines kept the audience laughing.

Also bringing lots of laughs to the audience was Weston Matlow with his various voices and the charismatic energy that is much needed for the role of Genie. Along with the role of Genie, I need to point out the great use of lighting effects for his entrances. The use of flashing blue lights helped signify the magic behind the Genie.

Hannah Buck's facial expressions and physical comedy were wonderful. The moment where she was having fun dancing on the balcony to "Prince Ali" only to be scolded by Jafar was very funny.

Also with the physical comedy it is important to mention Gabe Omlor. Though he didn't have any lines, his physicality showed exactly what Abu was thinking and feeling throughout the show, which can be difficult to do.

One particular scene in the show stuck with me as being very well done. From the lights to the comedic partnerships between Genie, Aladdin, and Abu, the magic carpet rides out of the cave left everyone laughing. The facial expressions of those three, along with the Genie grabbing onto Aladdin's neck for safety and resulting in Aladdin passing out, was hilarious. The three, throughout the show, had a give and take relationship where they knew when it was their turn to shine, and then when it was someone else's moment they knew not to pull focus. They made a great comedic trio.

Overall, this production had me smiling and laughing the entire time. The excitement and joy the kids expressed during this production really brought a boundless energy to the theatre. I only wish the play was longer, because I would have loved to have seen even more.