

LITTLE
JACK
HORNER
2000

MENT



RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

Nothing like this Dame

IT WAS Teddington Theatre Club's turn last week to launch their panto at Hampton Hill Playhouse and the choice was Paul Reakes' *Little Jack Horner* directed by veteran of the genre (his third), Peter Slater.

Before curtain-up, Alan Coleman, a rather low-key villain, Graball, left us in no doubt of his evil intentions to steal the priceless outsize pearl from the Royal persons. Cue to hiss and boo. One of the perks of panto is that everybody in the cast can be as rude as they like to each other, and especially to the audience.

Then we were at Dimwits' Skule with Denise Truscott's angelic Miss Patience leading her villainous looking pupils into 'Good Morning Sunshine'.

David Hennigan and Evelyn Williams made a great team in some knockabout comedy as Bertie and Gertie, every teacher's nightmare, rather oversize kids.

There is/was Nothing Quite Like the Dame of Stephen Bentley, playing the role for the first time with more than a hint of the late Les Dawson's bawdy humour. One minute marvellously dignified, the next raucously laughing at

his own crude jokes. I suspect he'll be in great demand for future pantos.

Matthew Davey made a likeable hero who easily won audience support as the much maligned Jack Horner and Christine Armstrong slapped her fishnetted thighs mercilessly as principal boy Prince Peter.

'It's Never Too Late To Fall In Love', Jack Smerdon's King found, although it wasn't with the

stoutly defended her Jack while Lesley Fuller and Debbie Smith inhabited the unusually aggressive panto cow, Carmen, who saw off the wicked gypsy chief, Vasaleno given swagger and bravado by Tony Yorath.

And so, as good eventually triumphed over evil there were Santas galore, Dame Dimwit resplendent in a gold concoction with the entire



Matt Davey and Deborah Daines in Little Jack Horner

acid-dripping Queen of Lynne Ferguson.

Gypsy girl Rosa was given a feisty performance by Brezetta Thonger as she

cast assembled for a great finale of 'Here It Is Merry Christmas', and everybody definitely having fun.

Jenny Scott