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## **BABES IN THE WOOD**

**Tea Tree Players Youth Group**  
Tea Tree Players Theatre

Review by Simon Slade

"Babes in the Wood", written by popular English playwright Jim Sperinck, is a traditional and fun-packed version of this popular pantomime tale. The story is familiar, but there is plenty of updated material to keep everyone entertained.

In this story, Tom, played by Elliott Clarke, and Mary, played by Lis Cross, have been orphaned. They need to go and stay with their Uncle, who, as luck would have it, is the Sheriff of Nottingham. The Sheriff of course has other ideas, and lays his plots with the assistance of his henchmen, Nickle and Dime.

The heroes include Robin Hood, played by Gabrielle Neary, and Maid Marian, played by Michaela Phillips. Add in the feather brained Nurse Nightingale, played by Gabbie Brown, and you have a recipe for a night of fun. Gabbie Brown is hilarious!

Most of the laughs come from the scenes involving the Sheriff, played by Karl Phillips, and his sidekicks, Nickle, played by Tim Giessauf, and Dime, played by Edward Walls. The scenes where the guards are being instructed on their dastardly deeds are like a cross between Monty Python's "Holy Grail" and an episode of "Blackadder"! The programme says that the two young villains are in their first show, but they ham it up like old pros! "Three Little Maids from School" will never be the same!

The opening night audience didn't need much encouragement to get into the panto spirit. They had a wonderful time, booing the Sheriff, greeting the Fairy Queen, and yelling out advice.

Rebecca Cross and Tegan Hensen have mastered one of the hardest roles any performer could wish for – a two person suit character. As Desmond the Deer, they did a fine job.

Jo Allenby's wonderful costumes helped make this fairy tale come to life.

There were some lovely voices in the musical numbers, and dance routines were well executed on the small stage. The choreography is very basic. A few more simple, but effective, moves would improve the musical numbers dramatically. There was also a flat spot in Act II where the energy just seemed to disappear.

As usual, Tea Tree Players have produced a fun and traditional panto. The sense of community at Tea Tree Players is obvious, and they continue to surprise and delight.