

# Slapstick comedy at its best

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WIDOW Twankey has to be the funniest character in Aladdin at The Anvil Basingstoke, which runs until January 5, 2020.

What makes this role, performed by Nic Gibney, so enjoyable, is the excellent Westcountry accent and the range of costumes and hairstyles.

Yes, a Westcountry woman in the middle of China, running a laundry. Stranger things must have happened.

Old Twankey is mother of Aladdin (Mark Rhodes) and Wishee Washee (Christopher Pizzey, also Director).

When Wishee Washee goes through the laundry mangle, "he's flat out at the moment", according to Twankey.

"Where were you between five and seven?" questions PC Pong to Twankey. "School," comes the reply...

Following some slapstick comedy, Widow Twankey instructs Wishee Washee and PC Pong not to touch the lever and not to make a mess. After she leaves the room, the inevitable happens to roars of delight from the children.

But it's when Widow Twankey bows with loud flatulence as she greets the Emperor (Andrew Gallo) that my wife erupts into fits of giggles. It's great to see.



Mind your head! The stars of the show had the audience falling about with laughter

Watching this performance with my wife and three children, son Henry (3) loves the imaginary police car. PC Pong presses his make-believe keyfob, which emits a bleep bleep and he gets in.

This new form of transport is the result of cutbacks, apparently. Highly likely Henry and his sisters will be doing this around the house in coming weeks.

Wishee Washee explains how unfortunate his family were "so poor, we had no front door" and that

he's had various jobs including shoe recycling but it was "sole destroying".

There are plenty of songs but the strongest has to be Higher Love performed by Princess Jasmine (Ashleigh Mackness).

Lovers of accents will also be delighted by Abanazar's (Mark Moraghan) Liverpudlian. "Calm down, calm down," he insists and much else besides.

Other aspects of the performance hold the attention further still.

Real flames shoot up from the stage floor - and you can feel the heat.

There are sparklers on one of the scene changes and the magic

carpet ride cleverly employs digital technology.

We're sitting in the top row of seats to the left of the stage from where it is possible to see the band and the drummer particularly catches Henry's attention.

We also notice that the keyboard player no longer has sheet music but a high tech digital screen.

It takes a lot to keep the attention of three children aged eight and under for two hours but they've achieved it; there was no restlessness whatsoever.

This year's Pantomime will run at the Anvil until January 5.

For more information visit [anvilarts.org.uk](http://anvilarts.org.uk)



Panto paradise: Revellers got a fun-filled performance at the Anvil