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PANTO LOVERS GET A TASTE OF YORKSHIRE AT LONDON'S PALLADIUM

Yorkshire grabbed a slice of the limelight at the world famous London Palladium this week to celebrate this season's fantastic pantomime Dick Whittington, produced by a Scarborough-based family company.

Qdos Entertainment, run by husband and wife team Nick and Sandra Thomas, is one of the largest entertainment groups in Europe and while it operates from London's Covent Garden, it's retained its head office in Scarborough for 33 years.

Welcome to Yorkshire took its famous Y to the theatre today where the panto opened to rave reviews from audiences and critics alike. It continues its run, entertaining thousands of festive theatregoers, until Sunday 14 January 2018.

Halifax actor Emma Williams is part of the stellar cast which includes Julian Clary, Elaine Paige, Ashley Banjo and Diversity, Paul Zerdin, Nigel Havers, Gary Wilmot and Charlie Stemp.

Emma, who plays the role of Alice Fitzwarren, shot to fame at just 18 when she created the role of Truly Scrumptious in the multi-million pound stage adaptation of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang at the London Palladium opposite Michael Ball.

Since then she has gone on to create further roles in original musicals such as Zorro, Love Story and Mrs Henderson Presents for which she received Olivier Award nominations.

Emma said it was a thrill to be part of the cast: "I grew up watching pantomime, we went to Bradford and saw the pantos at the Alhambra every year so for me to actually be in one at the London Palladium is amazing. This is the place I made my West End debut when I came down as a very green naïve 18 year old from Yorkshire and it now feels like my second home."

Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire Sir Gary Verity said: "It's an honour to bring a bit of Yorkshire to the capital to share some of the limelight and celebrate some of the great talent from our region that makes productions like this so popular and so successful."

Qdos Entertainment's founder and Chairman Nick Thomas said: "We are delighted to play a small part in showcasing my home county of Yorkshire in the glittering West End this festive season."

Emma Williams is pictured with Sir Gary Verity, Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire at London's Palladium

ENDS

Notes for editors:

- Welcome to Yorkshire is the official destination management organisation for Yorkshire, working to grow the county's visitor economy.
- Welcome to Yorkshire is a not-for-profit membership organisation, funded in part by grants, sponsorship and Welcome to Yorkshire members. All money raised is reinvested directly back into promoting Yorkshire.

Key facts:

- Tourism in Yorkshire is worth £7 billion annually
- The county's industry employs almost a quarter of a million people

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