

All white on the night after snow showers cause havoc

SNAPE: It might be a showbiz cliché, but the Co-op Juniors showed the real meaning of the show must go on when they lost much of their audience and some of the cast before last night's opening of their Christmas Spectacular.

It's taken planning on a military scale to turn this year's Co-op Juniors Theatre Company Christmas Spectacular from dream to reality.

Despite the heavy snow showers which forced many members of the audience to turn back, the show started on time – but the empty seats will have been a disappointment to the cast of 105.

Hundreds upon hundreds of hours had gone into getting the new set, 700 costumes, the lighting, which involves programming more cues than a big rock show; sound and performances honed to perfection.

"The key to staging a show of this complexity is planning: where the cast have to be, whose got to be where, getting all the equipment, set and everything else up to Snape and making sure it all works – it's a big



SEASONAL FUN: The Co-op Juniors Christmas Spectacular opened at Snape Maltings last night.

Picture: MIKE KWASNAK

operation," said the company's technical director Alan Ayres.

It's the company's fifth year at Snape Maltings and its 30th entertaining Suffolk. Normally a frosty Snape seems the ideal location for the Christmas show – but a snowed-up Snape is difficult for all those but the most hardy to reach.

"You come in and it feels warm,

cosy and Christmassy. The whole feeling is like sitting in front of a roaring log fire with your feet up, toasting marshmallows," said Mr Ayres.

"It's been a real benefit in spreading the word about what the Co-op Juniors' Theatre Company can do and finding a wider audience."

Snape has some tickets left and

there's still good availability for the 7.30pm performances on Sunday and Tuesday.

Charter Hall Colchester has good availability for all the performances on December 28, at 7pm, December 29, at 3pm and 7pm, plus December 30, at 3pm. Mr Ayres added that it's always worth checking for returns.