



# Abracadabrashazam!

Here comes Aladdin, rubbing his pesky little lamp, and hey, presto! The Genie of British pantomime is back on the Toronto stage just in time for Christmas.

Panto, a hoary relic of music hall, has long since been sanitized for kid viewing, but as connoisseurs know, some of the essential elements remain: cross-dressing, ad-libbing forever, peppy renditions of pop hits and lots of audience participation.

In this year's production of *Aladdin, the Magical Family Musical*, it's going to be jeers for Ross Petty, the hyper-evil wizard Abanazar (seen at left, top), and cheers for the Genie of the Ring, TV's chatterbox Camilla Scott (centre left), and Tyley Ross's hero (far left). The Emperor of China is being impersonated by Ernie Coombs, TV's Mr. Dressup (right), while Barry MacGregor swishes his skirts as Widow Twankey.

The only name missing is Karen Kain, Petty's wife, who in the past has dusted glitter on the mayhem. Kain retired this year from the National Ballet and, says Petty, "It's still too early for her to do one of these light things again." The orchestra is led by David Warrack, direction and choreography are by Glen Kotyk, and sets and costumes are being transported by magic rug from old Blighty. Star sponsor for the \$1.2-million show is Eaton's, with associate sponsor Dynamic Mutual Funds. For those too far away to reach Toronto's Elgin Theatre between Dec. 8 and Jan. 3, CTV is airing two of Petty's past pantos: *Robin Hood* on Dec. 17 and *Jack and the Beanstalk* on Dec. 24. —GINA MALLET