National Operatic & Dramatic Association London Region

Society : Shinfield Players

Production : Who Goes Bare?

Date : Friday 6th March 2020

Venue : Shinfield Theatre

Report by : Jeanette Maskell

 Show Report

I always enjoy my visits to this friendly society and it was great on this occasion to catch up with Dilys.

The success to every great farce is timing! Timing here was absolutely flawless with entrances and exits skilfully contrived, making them slick and sharp.

The imaginative set contributed greatly to the smooth running of the action keeping it moving at a superb pace.

Direction was capable and clever with thoughtful guidance given to characterisations. It had been expertly cast with some fine performances and absolutely no weak links!

It was packed with double entendre, people divesting their clothing and doors opening and closing; it was all in all; funny lively and entertaining and had the audience laughing out loud!

**Brian Nixey –** (Mr Butcher) – This was a well delineated characterisation of the mobster who is after the deeds to the spa or rather a lot of money! His deadpan dialogue delivery was perfect as were his bewildered menacing visuals. I really liked the way he kept his hat on in the sauna, and the way; during the chase, he doffed it every time he went passed the inert body of Joan!

**Adam Wells –** (Eddie Manchip) – From his first drunken entrance this actor had the audience totally absorbed in his wild antics. His comic timing was spot on intensifying his already dynamic dialogue. I love his spontaneous manner reactions and interaction it is one of the reasons he stands out from the rest. His spirited visuals and easy movement were perfect for the role and culminated in a faultless performance

**Maggie Smith –** (Minnie) – This actress gave a standout performance! I adored her ditsy character, her bobbing, arm waving constant cries of “Oh Sir” and her obsession with Philip. She was so funny, totally captivating and demanded our attention every time she made an entrance. Her accent added greatly to her dialogue which was lively and energetic, and her visuals (although rather hampered by the glasses) were expressive and animated

**Matt Lugg –** (Brian Manchip) – As the rather staid accountant pursued by his jealous wife this actor was great. He had intuitive reaction and interaction which was heightened by a superb sense of timing. His dialogue was flustered and his bumbling manner was absolutely right for the character. I liked the complete contrast he created in his relationships with Nancy and Joan and the brotherly rapport with Eddie tangible and natural.

**Jessica Gardener –** (Mrs Court-Bending) – With her BBC English accent and brusque manner this actress had most definitely nailed the character. I enjoyed the way she swanned on and off the stage taking control and not giving the other characters a chance to do say or do anything.

Great dialogue visuals and movement!

**Caroline White –** (Nancy McSmith) – Believing she is checked into a naturist resort this young lady divested her clothing and appeared totally at ease in doing so. I so liked the way she kept appearing at the window which was exactly the right height to give the impression that she was completely naked! She was bubbly sassy and flirtatious with spirited dialogue and visuals. What an absolute hoot when she appeared in the face pack that had set so she was unable to speak; and I was mightily impressed that she did not try to move her mouth at any point.

**Sandra Miall –** (Joan Manchip) – This actress always captures the very essence of the character right down to the fine details. Her dialogue was superlatively dynamic and spirited, becoming delightfully slurred during her drunk scene. Her interaction with the other characters was first rate and her relationship with Brian troubled and affected.

**Philippe Duquenoy –** (Maxie Maudlin) – As the quick-change artist booking into the spa because he thinks the characters were taking control of him, this actor was outstanding! I just loved the way someone would mention a character and he would immediately appear as that individual. He changed his dialogue, timbre of his voice, expressions and deportment to suit the character he was portraying, most commendable!

**Lorraine Willis –** (Police Sergeant) – This minor character was integral to the plot and well portrayed by this actress. Her dialogue visuals and movement were all pertinent to that of a police officer.

**James Lawbuary –** (Angus McSmith) – I loved this character with his exaggerated Scottish accent and cantankerous personality. His accent enhanced his snappy dialogue brilliantly and his facial expressions were melodramatically magnified due to his head being at a rakish angle to his body!

**Philippe Duquenoy –** (Director) – Philippe had created a fun energetic and immaculately timed piece of theatre which skipped along at a lightening pace. His direction was skilled and adept and he had worked with the cast to develop some excellent natural characters and establish some chaotic relationships therein. Staging was superb, although there were a couple of continuity errors with people going in the gym and coming out the sauna or vice versa! Maybe they were connected? The final scene with every cast member cavorting around the stage and every door in use was just amazing and carried out with precision timing. Minnie appearing at the top of the stairs in her wedding dress was so funny and when Eddie decides to marry her for her money Maxie appearing as the vicar was hilarious and had the audience guffawing uncontrollably. Congratulations a well-directed farce.

**Graham Vockins –** (Stage Manager) – This SM did a sterling job in ensuring the cast were able to easily manoeuvre round the back of the set to make their timely entrances. He also made certain that the props team were able to make sure everything that needed to be in the cupboard (and there were quite a few) was in the cupboard.

**Tim Howling –** (Set Design) – This set built by **members of the society** was outstanding. Having nine practical doors, (four of which were up a short flight of steps) meant that it had to be sturdy and it certainly was. The upper level with its balustrade and the stairs with handrails were magnificent and added greatly to the overall look of the set. Painting the whole thing white really helped to create the impression of a health spa.

**Di Capel –** (Art Design) – I am guessing the artwork talked about here is the programme cover? I have already spoken about this and said how much I liked it.

**Matthew Chishick –** (Lighting Design) – Although there were no special effects the lighting did what is was supposed to giving a warm overall feel. It flooded the stage and ensured the window was well illuminated

**Steve Townsend –** (Sound Design) – I was so impressed with the sound and effects which were ideal. From the telephone to the sirens everything worked famously.

**Matthew Chishick/Jesse Dopson –** (Sound/Lighting Operation) – These technicians operated the sound and lighting with expertise meeting all cues with perfection.

**Carol Vockings –** (Wardrobe) – Towels and bath robes played quite a large part of this costume plot. However, men’s suits and lady’s day wear were ideal and Angus’ traditional dress complete with kilt and oversized sporran was delightful. Minnie’s overall and mob cap suited her character perfectly and her wedding dress was a sight to behold. Other costumes of note were Mr Butcher’s mobster suit and hat the police uniform the vicar’s surplice and Brian’s delectable bin liner!

**Debbie Wheeler/Amy Lockwood –** (Properties) – This pair had made sure that every prop was appropriate for it’s use. The suitcase, Philip (why was he in a skirt?) the wheelchair and that all-important portrait of the stag! The stage was well dressed with the desk strategically placed to create the maximum acting area. The items on the desk were just as you would expect to find in a reception area.

**Philippe Duquenoy/Sandra Miall –** (Programme) – Printed on a matte white paper with a super legible font this programme was quite basic; yet had all the necessary information. I liked the cover, with its caricatures perfectly portraying the plot. The black and white photos taken by **Philippe Duquenoy** were rather (if I might say) strange! I think it was a combination of the angle that they were taken and the background colour?

Thank you

***Jet***

Jeanette Maskell - NODA Representative - London Region - Area 13