

NATIONAL OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION LONDON REGION

Society ; Twyford & Ruscombe Theatre Group
Production ; **"MURDER! MYSTERY! and SUSPENDERS?"**
Date ; Friday 3rd October 2008
Venue ; Loddon Hall, Twyford
Report by ; Henry Hawes - NODA Representative - Area 13

On Friday 3rd October 2008, I attended the Loddon Hall in Twyford to review the Twyford & Ruscombe Theatre Groups latest presentation **"Murder! Mystery! and Suspenders?"** Once again Twyford came up with a play I had never seen before, so I took my seat in the auditorium to see what transpired. I found that the play was similar to a Victorian melodrama brought up to date with each scene being announced with a sign carried by an attractive young lady and which announced which scene was playing. The play got off to a slow start but soon picked up pace which was carried through to the final curtain. Overall the cast gave a good interpretation of their various characters. The dialogue was well pointed and projected so that every word could be heard. Staging had been well devised with good movement throughout, all contained in an excellent, atmospheric set.

Ian McDonald - (Sir TIMOTHY De'ATH) - This is the type of role I look for these days, being murdered in the opening scene, in fact, even before that, with the dramatic appearance of a 'flopping' arm through the 'tabs' before 'curtain up' - very dramatic and set the scene for what was to follow.

Melanie Sherwood - (Mrs BULL) - Melanie was a typical 'Housekeeper' of the period. Her facial expressions and stature was absolutely spot-on - This was a well presented character.

Georgina Twomey - (MEGAN De'ATH) - As the daughter of the house, Georgina presented a 'spoilt little madam' very well indeed. She displayed all the necessary mannerisms with good diction and movement - This was a good characterisation.

Jocelyn Robinson - (CONSTANCE PAYNE) - As one of the original 'Womens-Libber' and a member of the Suffragette movement of the time, Jocelyn gave a good performance - well in character with just the right movement and facial expressions with good diction throughout - Well done.

Kim Castle - (DOTTY THE MAID) - This was a lovely part played by Kim, she certainly lived up to her name 'Dotty'. This characterisation was maintained throughout the performance, with good comedy timing and some wonderful facial expressions - Well done.

Frank Kaye - (INSPECTOR BUTLER) - Frank can always be relied on to present just the right character in whatever part he plays and this was no exception. As the 'bumbling' Police Inspector he was spot-on with good comedy timing - Well done.

Neil Stewart - (IVOR PAYNE) - As the husband of 'Constance', Neil played his role absolutely right, here we had good movement, diction and facial expressions.

Robert Botsford - (HAROLD 'Harry' FLASH) - As the delivery man who gets involved in the various machinations which surrounded the murder of 'Sir Timothy', Robert was excellent, his portrayal being exactly right bringing out all the inherent humour in the script - Well done.

Donald Nicam - (CHIEF INSPECTOR CORNER) - This was a minor role in the overall play, appearing in the second act. I always think this is a hard thing to do, having to come on cold half way through the performance and it is very easy to lose the continuity, but not on this occasion as Donald had the right characterisation at the very outset and presented a believable character.

Laila Hamments - (SCENE ANNOUNCER) - Laila presented her part well in announcing the various scenes by means of notice boards, very reminiscent of 'Old Time Variety' days.

Kirk Wootton - (DIRECTOR)

Neil Tyler - (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR) - These two had obviously got the best out of their cast with some good characters being presented, all with the slightly 'tongue-in-cheek' portrayal that is so necessary in this type of play. Staging had been well devised with good movement by the cast. After a slow start the pace picked up with good diction and projection throughout although at times cast members were inclined to speak upstage when their voices were lost. I was a little concerned in respect of the flash-back and found it somewhat disconcerting and difficult to follow!

Ian Darling - (STAGE MANAGER & SET DESIGN) - This appeared a well-managed stage with no visible hitches throughout the performance. Ian had designed a first-class set which presented well the library of a large country house of the period.

Set Construction

Crew - This crew had constructed a good looking set, it looked solid and had been well painted with good perspective.

David P. Goddard - (LIGHTING) - A good lighting plot which generated the right atmosphere in the various scenes and indicated well the various times of day in the various scenes. Cues on the night of my visit were well picked up.

Davis A. Goddard - (SOUND) -It would appear that the sound plot had been well thought out as I could hear every spoken word without distortion.

Sheila Carney & Cast Members - Costumes for the cast had been well devised, fitting the various characters and the period on display.

Programme - A compact programme which contained all the necessary information and interesting cast biographies.

Front of House - Once again this society presented a very high standard of Front of House staff, easily identifiable, smartly dressed and attentive to their audience.

Thank you for inviting me to your latest presentation which was a most enjoyable production and kept me guessing to the end. May I wish you all success with your future shows.

Henry

Henry Hawes - NODA Representative- Area 13