

Move Over Mrs Markham

A comedy by Ray Cooney & John Chapman
Performed in June 1991

Sorting out a matter of some confusion

Allow me to introduce Alistair Spenlow, or perhaps it is Philip Markham, or possibly even the dog... And this is Phillips the butler, or perhaps it is actually Philip Markham... And this is most certainly Linda Lodge, or could it be Sylvie the au pair girl?

Well, the cast of Faringdon Community Dramatic Society's latest production, *Move Over Mrs Markham*, seemed to have it all beautifully sorted out. And the audience loved the fast-moving bedroom farce of mistaken identity.

Getting the timing right for all the typical Ray Cooney/John Chapman witty one-liners is a real challenge for an amateur group, but Faringdon rose to the task magnificently on the whole - though Alan Taylor, in an otherwise well-considered character, did unfortunately tend to swallow some of his best throwaways. Lucy Walden as Joanna Markham (no mistaken identities here) kept up a remarkably consistent and faultless performance as the wife trying, as the water gets deeper and deeper, to keep all the combatants (including her own husband) apart. And Peter Webster as the interior decorator-turned-ladies' man complemented her equally faultlessly, to produce the best of the show's comic partnerships.

Tim Reeves as Henry Lodge, Markham's business partner, did not

again, set up a splendid comic partnership with Deirdre Hamley. Deidre, despite one or two unfortunate lapses in her lines, carried off a wonderful characterisation of the spinsterish children's author Miss Smythe.

Helen Barter was spot-on as the self-indulgent looking-for-a-thrill Linda Lodge, and turned on a nice pseudo-German accent when doubling for Sylvie. Sylvie herself was in the hands of Brenda Keith-Walker.

Being a perfect gentleman myself, I could not bring myself to headline the attractions which Mary Green brought to her part as the vamp, Miss Wilkinson. Suffice it to say that she was in absolutely perfect shape for the part, and her dress sense caused more than a few heartbeats to rev up among the males in the audience (which fortunately, on the night I attended, included her husband).

The director was Dave Headey, who met the very difficult challenges of a farce of this kind very well indeed. The pace never flagged.

Particular compliments to the continuity girl, Jo Webster, and all who made sure that characters were in the right place at the right time, and carrying the right props - absolutely essential to the success

have quite the same comedy opportunities, but he was skilful in taking what were on offer - and,

of this production.

I.S.

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