

Oxfordshire Drama Network

ODN Review

The Importance of Being Earnest – Oscar Wilde

As it is some time since we saw this play, we felt that we could review without any recent experience to colour our pleasure.

Opening scene showed a very good set, complete with portrait of Wild. Furniture good and very melodic music off stage. This was performed by Kathryn Whiffen, a member of the group and a very talented musician. Pity she didn't take a bow.

A bit of cast doubling up by Austen Roberts who played both Lane (Algernon's butler) and Merriman (Jack's country butler). An example of good characterisation as both is completely different. Well done Austen.

After a bit of nervousness to begin with, Daniel Lander grew into the part of Algernon and did not make the mistake of talking with his mouth full of cucumber sandwiches (believe me it has been done!).

Similarly Adrian Wells was a little nervous to start but again swiftly got over it to give a competent performance of Jack.

Lady Bracknell, played by Sarah Varnon was unique. No trying to copy any previous portrayal. The "handbag" speech was cleverly given, with the "handbag" not over the top. An example of how trying it in a different manner works as well, if not better, than the original. A beautifully stony face at times. Not a person to meddle with. Laughter pauses expertly timed.

On to the two charming and very silly girls Gwendolin and Cecily – Jayne Isham and Verity Crowsdon respectively. Both girls making their debut with Faringdon D.S. and both will, no doubt, be seen on stage again. Two lovely parts and it was obvious that they were enjoying playing these daft, romantic dollies with just a touch of steel in their characters.

That leaves Miss Prism and Reverend Canon Chasuble. The Rev. was delightfully played by John Taylor and his costume was superb. Miss Prism, to me, was one of the best I have ever seen. Joan Lee showed once again what a good actor she is.

A lovely bit of nonsense, which of course was exactly what Wilde was aiming for. The years do not detract from the pleasure of the piece. As the programme quoted: "we should treat all trivial things very seriously and all serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality".

Thank you Faringdon Dramatic Society

Jackie Heath