



Society : Faringdon Dramatic Society.
Production : Our Town, by Thornton Wilder.
Date : 13th November 2009.
Venue : Faringdon Junior School.
Report by : Gareth Jeremy.

Report

My thanks to **Karen Whiffen** for the invitation to review your latest production. This was a very interesting choice of show, because not only did the **characters have to act, but they had to mime a considerable amount, ---as the author of the play deliberately wished to keep both set, and props to a minimum,--- relying on the actors, and the imagination of the audience, to create the atmosphere, and to convey relationships and emotions.**

I must say, all the cast rose to the challenge, ---- and did a brilliant job. It is so easy to forget the simple things, --- like closing a door after entering a room etc. I liked the way **Mrs, Webb, and Rebecca, sliced the beans.!**

This was a large cast, twenty two in all, ---- and I apologise in advance that time, and space does not allow me, to comment on each individual, --- suffice it is to say that this was an excellent **Team effort, ---- and every character supported each other with a worthwhile performance.**

Principal Characters.

Debbie Lock. ---- Stage Manager.

This experienced actor set the scene for the evening, and did a superb performance. Her diction was clear and precise, and she varied the tone of her voice, as and when required. This showed her true professionalism to her character. Congratulations.

Daniel Lander, ---- Dr Gibbs.

Another fine performance, articulate, and his timing is good. Can adapt very easily to different characters that he plays.

Karen Whiffen, ---- Mrs Gibbs.

Seemed very much at 'home', and relaxed in her character role. Her diction was good, and she showed her emotion to her family. Well done.

Tom Woolman, ---- George.

Tom has certainly learnt a lot of stage craft since those early days, (at the age of 9). He was articulate, and he understood his character well. A fine performance.

Harriet Warner, ---- Emily.

Looked good on stage, and again got into her character well, --- she showed her emotions well, and this was reflected to the audience especially in Act 3. (they felt for you, ---- one lady near me had her paper tissue in her hand, --- and wiped a tear) !!, ---- or was it the play.? --- no it was your performance. Well done.

Adrian Wells, ---- Mr Webb.

Adrian joined the Society, quote, --- 'for a laugh', ---- this play was no laugh, --- but he took his role in the appropriate manner, --- and again understood his character. Diction was fine, and he made good use of the stage.

Janie Eyre- Brook, ---- Mrs Webb.

Janie has not lost 'her stage craft'. Again well suited for the role, and it was interesting to see the different mannerisms of the two mothers, -- this added to the enjoyment of the production. Clear diction once again, --- and the miming was first class.

Photographs were in the programme of some 'Principal Characters'----- however, as stated earlier there were fine performances by everyone, ---- I must mention, ----- the paper boy, the milk man, Professor Willard, Constable Warren, George, and Rebecca Gibbs, Mrs Soames, - (a real gossip).--- they all contributed a little bit extra to the overall performances. I thought the milk mans' horse was with us in the room.!!.

As with every production, ---- what would any Society do without those **invaluable 'Behind the Scenes' Individuals.**

Producer, ---- Sandra Keen, ---- I'm sure had been of great help to the Director.

Set Design, and Construction, ----- Peter Webster, Allan Dover, Jo Webster.-- a team who know what is required for this hall. Very experienced, and on this occasion very little had to be made. I liked the ' congregation ' flats in the auditorium, they looked very realistic, and in the chapel singing, you felt as if someone was situated behind the figures. Imaginative, well done.

Stage Manager, ---- Jeff Barry, and Alan Merrick. ---- did their work efficiently. It would have looked more professional if they had been dressed in black e.g. wearing a Faringdon black sweater, ---- as some of the Front of House Team were.

Costumes, ----- Jeni Summerfield and Joan Lee. ----- these were in the hands of two very experienced individuals, and their thought and imagination to detail, in the correct period is fantastic, the correct gloves, the wide bracers, etc Congratulations.

Prompt, ----- Amanda Linstead and Sarah Cousins. ---- you do an invaluable job,- -- levels of concentration have to be extremely high, -- you have to be ready at times for the un-expected !! --- you are 'taken for granted ' by many, ---- and on Friday evening, ---- you were redundant. !! Did you know the play by the end of the week.!

Lighting, and Sound, ----- Gary Bates and Ian Chandler

I was impressed with the level of expertise in both areas. The set was very effectively lit, I especially liked the Church, with the red filters on the church windows, there were a few occasions when the narrator was not lit. The sound was very effective, and spot on cue, from the arrival of the early morning train, to the singing of the congregation in chapel. Well done.

Music, ----- Debra Warner. ----- this was prepared obviously with the correct talented individual. Did the cast record the tape or not.?