

Emley Drama Group - Cash on Delivery

Director Kelvyn Waites

Michael Cooney's farce concerning Eric Swan who, having lost his job, begins to falsely claim benefit from the DHSS, was once again a great winner with the audience. In true style even the cast begins to wonder which character they are playing, with which name, at any one time. Played with excellent pace and confidence it was a true team effort, everyone fitting into their parts and seemingly relishing the challenge. I particularly enjoyed John Emms as the DHSS Inspector and full marks to Gary Wilkinson (Eric) for holding the whole thing together successfully, especially in summarily dealing with a recalcitrant door bell! Well done the whole company.

Phoenix Players (Rotherham) – Shadowlands (Report by John Sykes)

Producer Neil Mather

This is a play that pulls at the heartstrings and the Players, with their outstanding skill and ability, did just that. I didn't know the story but Carole did and she informed me that it was a 'tissue job' and it was just that. The central figure in the play, C.S. Lewis was performed by Rod Bramall sympathetically and with great feeling – a brilliant performance which was needed to balance the excellence of the other members of the cast, even George Glasby as the son, Donald, played his part without any apparent nerves.

Everton Village Players - Ladies Day

Director David Larder

Once again the hall space was used imaginatively to create the numerous scenes necessary for this play. The different levels between the main stage, the hall floor and the rostra denoting the factory encouraged a flow of movement which added to the atmosphere. The scene changes were handled very well, helping the good pace essential to this production. The four female fish packers, Sue Dolby, Jane Bardsley, Linda Larder and Margaret Hamilton, made a very good team, with a variety of strong characterisations but still believably friends. David de Roeck enjoyed himself hugely as the TV Commentator and successfully doubled as the factory manager. Tony Ballarini was impressive as the jockey, conjuring up a vivid picture of his life in the saddle. Excellently done everyone!

Honley Players ADS - Ladies in Retirement (Report by Jean Taylor)
Director Mary Plested

An intriguing plot – with the likely answer to the question ‘Where is she?’ – in front of you from the start of the second act. Some beautifully played characters really impressed me, particularly Helen Martland as ‘Leonora’ – the one who disappeared – and Beverley Turner as ‘Ellen’ – the eldest of the three sisters. Jenny Jimenez and Janette Ward played the two simple minded sisters very well indeed and their certainty that this house belonged to their sister Ellen was quite disturbing. Louise Leggett as the maid ‘Lucy’ was completely taken in by Stephen Waind as the ‘ne-er do well’ Albert, while Andrea Gosslin as the Nun ‘Sister Theresa’ brought extra confusion to the plot. Very well presented in a splendid period set. Many thanks.

Flockton and District DG - A Foot in the Door (Report by H.Stafford)
Director Geoff Haywood

As I did not see their play I am pleased to include a report sent as a letter to Geoff from a member of the audience visiting the district at the time. It was a comedy based on the sitting room of an old lady. The cast had clear, well defined roles, each giving a very different but plausible portrayal. The ensuing mayhem, from the old lady, inviting a range of sales people into her home, was comedy from the word go. Lines were delivered at a fast pace and with panache. Body language from the different cast members also spoke volumes, as well as the attention to detail in both the costumes and the set. May (Rita Macfarlane), held the whole play together with a delightful, dizzy character. The final twist at the end was unexpected, along with the pathos of her character. Lighting and credible sound effects added to the performance.

Denys Edwards Players - Celebration
Directors Sue Toulson and Gay Wilfin

This well known Willis and Hall comedy, set in the 1950's, is a favourite for societies and audiences alike. Older members look back with some nostalgia, younger ones in some disbelief, as the programme notes say “when weddings cost tens of pounds rather than tens of thousands”. A large cast inhabited the Library Theatre stage, with well organised movement and positioning to incorporate the amount of props. requiring to be set. Much of the humour was generated by the Broadbents, Arthur and Frank (John Atkinson and Graham Seaton), together with Edna and Alice Fuller (Francesca Flynn and Sue Toulson). I felt the pace was a little slow in the first Act, I should like to have seen the ‘fur fly’ more, but comedy and pathos were well balanced.

Honley Players ADS - 84 Charing Cross Road

Director Mark Thewlis

Skilfully adapted for the stage from a book of the same name, this play offers the two main characters an opportunity to show particular acting skills. Use of voice and body language are vital to keep the audience's interest, as there is little action and no direct interplay between them. Anna Brook, as the budding American writer, Helen Hanff, attacked her part with great verve and is to be complimented on her handling of numerous long speeches. Dennis Thewlis was her opposite number in the London bookshop, well contrasted in his quiet, thoughtful approach as he showed a growing appreciation and concern for his young customer from across the 'Pond'. The bookshop was excellently created and Mark can be proud of his first drama production.