



Society : Chesham Theatre Company
Production : Calendar Girls
Date : 9th November 2012
Venue : Elgiva Theatre, Chesham
Report by : Rita Carpenter.

Report

INTRODUCTION

We received a warm welcome on arrival and were greeted by **Jenny Crumpton** who was, as always doing several jobs all competently.

Although I knew the story I wondered how it would adapt to a stage play, I need not have worried it adapted beautifully and offered a story that was both funny and at times extremely sad. **Stephanie Pemberton** made an excellent Director, with **Jenny Crumpton** as Producer. . Stephanie has a formidable C.V. and although it was her first time as director for Chesham Theatre Company I am sure they will be asking her back again very soon.

PROGRAMME

Designed by **Eleanor Phillips** with **Jenny Crumpton** responsible for the content it had a beautiful picture of sunflowers on the front cover courtesy of **Steve Urry** it was well designed and constructed, it had the NODA logo on the front and details inside of awards but no mention of what NODA does or stands for. Included were photographs and C.V's of the cast which is always useful and a synopsis of the play for those who were unaware of the plot .Printed on good quality paper it was something I am sure all the members will, keep as a souvenir.

STAGING AND SET

This was well designed with double doors at the back which were used most effectively. The front of the stage had an authentic stone wall and was covered in grass to depict the hill that John so loved to climb. Designed by **Roger Miller** who, together with **Peter Larkham, Peter Threadgold, Trevor Pilling** and members of the company, constructed an strong and well thought out set. The scene where John dies and walks into the light was beautiful, you could have heard a pin drop in the theatre and I am sure there were quite a few of the audience (myself included) who were not dry eyed. I was particularly impressed

at the end when the lights faded and the set became a hill in silhouette this was a clever piece of theatre and a fitting end to what was an inspiring play.

SOUND

The sound, mostly evocative piano music was the responsibility of **Josh Rees** and added to the atmosphere of the action, well chosen and well delivered. interspersed with the W.I..anthem Jerusalem which made for more authenticity.

COSTUMES

Stephanie Pemberton and members of the cast must have worked hard to get the authenticity of the costumes together with wardrobe assistants **Ann Rogers** and **Averil Savage** they all worked well together for a clever end result. A special mention must surely go to **Judy Consden** as the props lady, she must have worked extremely hard to bring together all the components required for the filming of the ladies for the calendar and elicited a great reaction for the audience with ripples of applause for the way the props were used during the photographic sessions.

Clare Bunce as stage manager together with **Amy Hill** as her deputy worked really hard to ensure that the smooth running and continuity flowed seamlessly with no pauses or stilted moments.

THE CAST

Chesham Theatre Company have a very strong membership, and were able to present a superb selection of actors. There was not a weak link among them and each one acted their socks off to ensure a fault free production. Their accents were authentic and gave the feel of the Yorkshire village superbly.

Julia Carter gave a strong performance as Chris creating a believable character.

Diana Carter made an excellent Annie warm and very caring towards her husband and the anger she displayed towards Chris her best friend when she felt she was being betrayed was so believable it was easy to feel her pain.

Mary Murray was a feisty Cora bringing much to the group dynamics.

Dana Kidson was an excellent Celia and displayed her natural talent to the full.

Ruth was impressively played by **Catherine Imrie**, eager to please and rather under confident . She was teased by the others but what a transformation when she came into her own, a superb performance.

Liz Rogers played **Jessie** with style, she made the most of her comic lines and brought a maturity to the group.

Eleanor Phillips played Marie the Chairman of the W.I. with style, humourless and efficient she gave the members something to laugh about behind her back .and made the role believable.

Jenny Templeton demonstrated her versatility by playing Brenda, Lady Cravendale and the W.I. announcer with aplomb bringing much to the role.

Ian Slack was excellent playing both Lawrence and Liam, he has an impressive C.V.and is one to watch.

Jonathan Carter played Rod, Chris's husband, impulsive and very loving towards his wife.

Sasha O'Clee was great as Elaine, very funny but not the most likeable character and we almost cheered when she got her comeuppance.

I have left **Mike Consden** who played John till last, but not least. Not only a superb director, he played John with such conviction and feeling. As he slowly edged towards his death his performance was incredible and very moving and his demeanour so believable he almost had me in tears.

IN CONCLUSION .

This production was superbly performed and Stephanie is to be complimented on the way it was so sensitively done. The humour was brought to the fore and the sentiment never got sickly. It was interesting to see how some of the characters developed through their roles and became nicer people in the end.. Well done Chesham Theatre Group you have maintained the standard we have come to expect of you.