

NODA Adjudication

Allo Allo by Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft

Wickham Bishops Drama Club

8th April 2017

Directed by Michelle Bacon

It is always hard to produce a play that has been on television for years and is loved by so many. Expectation of the audience is paramount as they fondly remember the characters and they might go away a little disappointed if the standard hasn't been met. This was not the case for this superb production. Michelle Bacon, the director, had worked her magic with her 21 cast and 16 scenes to bring the characters to life as in the television series.

The French café was a well thought out set with bar, tables, windows, and an opening under the clock for the British airmen to pop their heads through. Other scenes were in front of tabs using small props and folding flats which worked very well. Full marks to the crew and stage manager who made this a slick affair and well-choreographed, using wonderful French music to cover any noise.

When Renee appeared with his usual hangdog expression I knew we were in for a great treat. Graham Pipe not only looked and sounded like Gordon Kaye but his mannerisms were spot on. With his two amours Yvette (Moiria Mont) and little Mimi (Linda Burgess) he totally stole the show. His wife Edith; a consummate performance by Pauline Roast, was a joy; her singing off tune was very humorous and her little dance hilarious.

The German contingent of Colonel Van Strohm (Roger Lyons) with his wonderful wig, Herr Otto Flick with his strut (Jack Williams), Helga and her swastika suspenders (Catherine Stott), the high voiced Lieutenant Gruber (Sam Knott) and General Schmelling and his eye patch (Ross McTaggart), were all great characterisations and worked so well together. Paul Galbraith as Captain Bertolli also gave us a great pseudo, Italian accent and played the character with great glee.

Officer Crabtree (James Milne) with his 'Good moaning' was a delight as was Michelle "I shall say this only once" (Jane Smith). Also lovely cameos by Lelerc (Ashley Saunders), the French peasants, British airmen and the piano player.

This was a hugely successful show and it's just such a shame it was only on for two nights as even though there were over 400 people through the doors, another night would have brought in more to see all your hard work and effort.

If I have one little gripe it's that you might need to put down the working lights stage left and right when you go on and off the set as it does tend to spoil the illusion, just by bringing down the workers it would have been totally seamless, Apart from that the lighting was good and I was very impressed with the snap lighting changes. Good choice of music too.

Congratulations to all. You each deserve a pat on the back for a very funny and successful show.