

Something Wicked, Wickham Bishops Drama Club,

Performed at Wickham Bishops Village Hall, Friday April 10, 2015

Director - Ian Lodge

Something Wicked is a play written by one of the members of the cast, Ian Lodge, and weaves the twin themes of am dram and the curse of “the Scottish play” into a highly entertaining comedy/whodunnit. The curtains open amidst eerie music and mysterious lighting to reveal the three witches, Anne, Liz and Sally, around the cauldron. As it happens they are simply rehearsing in the local village hall and we soon meet the other cast members, including Malcolm, the director; John, Anne’s husband and Steve, the secret lover of both Anne and Liz. The theatrical superstition that the word “Macbeth” cannot be uttered in a theatre outside of its rehearsal or performance context is the underlying motif throughout the play and there are clever echoes of the plot of Macbeth as Steve, having been murdered, returns as Banquo’s ghost, audible and visible only to John. Unlike Macbeth though John is not the murderer but is given the opportunity to turn back time and both prevent and unravel the mysterious murder.

This was a very strongly cast production that shared the workload fairly evenly throughout the evening and allowed for some strong character development. The three witches worked well as a group, were fluid in their dialogue and had distinct characterizations (all of which seemed almost polar opposites to those which were presented in the final scene). Anne (Pauline Roast) was capable and determined but was equally comfortable with jealousy, anger and her girlish enthusiasm in the final scene. Liz (Linda Burgess) pitched her performance as the slightly dumb blonde, superstitious, naïve and trusting, just right. The expostulation of the word “bum”, as the most tasteful swear word she could think of, was very funny. Sally (Ann Hewitt) was empowered by her organization and bitterness and provided the motive force (and the props !) for much of the plot development.

Malcolm (Jack Williams) was characterized as the slightly camp, overly fussy, artistic director; not too camp since he had to express his love for one of the ladies. Steve (Graham Pipe) came across well as the two-timing love-rat and John (Ian Lodge) did well as the orchestrator of the timing rewind and unraveller of the murder plot.

The physical backdrop for this play was a partially finished castle wall and central door. The only furniture was a mixture of old and modern chairs and tables, as would have been used during rehearsals before all the set had been built and the props had arrived. Good use of lighting, including lightning flashes and blackouts added to the effect. The incidental scene setting music was generally good but could have been extended into the beginning of each scene and faded more gently on occasion. These are minor constructive comments on what was a very entertaining evening overall and full credit for using a new script from a company member.

Congratulations to all. What a shame there were not more people in the audience to enjoy it.

Review – Stewart Adkins

Regional representative, District 8
NODA East