

Last week at the Rhoda McGaw theatre in Woking, the Ottershaw Players took to the stage in what was really an excellent production of Oscar Wilde's "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime". Lord Arthur, who was beautifully played by Mark Holton, spends the duration of the play desperately trying to commit murder in order to fulfil a prediction. The comedy was fast and furious as one unlikely scene moved seamlessly into the next, with each new character bringing in more and more opportunities for laughter. So much so, in fact, that if I were to criticise the production at all it would be simply to say that the script was a little long, which is not the fault of the Ottershaw Players, of course, but a couple of cuts to lose about ten minutes overall would have been welcome relief from the exhausting pace of the play.

The cast of ten were superbly directed by Peter More, who had a lightness of touch essential when presenting a period comedy. The actors almost all managed to avoid the pitfalls of caricature, and played their parts with realism. There were some really lovely performances, most notably Mark Holton in the title role; Matthew Horton as his eager to please butler, Baines; Alison Byers in the delightful role of Arthur's great-aunt Clementina and finally in a small but not insignificant role, Jill Coles as Nellie the maid. But truth be told all the cast were a joy to watch, and the production team of lighting, sound, wardrobe and set builders did the Ottershaw Players proud.

The audience had a wonderful time, laughing so hard sometimes that the cast weren't always comfortable leaving long enough gaps after each Wilde witticism, so a few lines were lost amongst the guffaws! A thoroughly enjoyable evening. Thank you to the Ottershaw Players.

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