

## OTTERSHAW PLAYERS

### 'ON THE RAZZLE' – MAY 2009

This version of the well-known story based on the original by John Oxenford was extremely entertaining and Stoppards' wordplay, particularly from Herr Zangler, was delightful. I imagine you did have great fun in rehearsals and you provided the audience with a lot of fun on the evening.

Once again Alan Wakefield had designed a superb set which adapted for the different locations apparently with ease, and the black and white chequered floor was stunning. Not to mention the cash container that descended on a wire from the sales area to the cash desk. I remember seeing one of those as a small child in a delightfully old fashioned shop in Somerset. Seeing it provided a nostalgic moment for many of us in the audience.

George Grafton gave a very good performance as Herr Zangler, such a wordy part and rapid delivery with which he coped admirably.

Sonders and Marie, played by Nick Daborne and Clare Groome respectively, came across well as the couple whose relationship was not an easy one, but who were determined for it to succeed. Because of the disparity in their heights it took a little time to see them as a romantic couple, but that was purely because of the stereo-typical image to which we are accustomed.

A business like performance from Jean Matthews in the role of Gertrud, very much a no nonsense Zangler employee, and Mark Holton played the part of Melchior confidently.

Paul Bungard took two very good parts and was most amusing as the effeminate tailor and the Italian waiter, with a good accent in the latter role.

The two shop assistants who set off for a night on the town or indeed 'on the razzle' were strongly represented by Hannah Rose as Christopher, and Phil Pile as Weiberl. Hannah had mastered the male stance and mannerisms and although we knew she was a girl she was utterly credible as the naïve yet spirited young man. Phil Pile was a good foil for her and they worked really well together. This was a very different character from Bill Sykes and Phil showed that despite his considerably recent steps into the limelight, he is a capable performer.

There were a number of smaller roles and those taking them acquitted themselves admirably which added to the success of the play, but particularly worthy of mention was Stewart Mison who played the totally uninhibited coachman with great relish, and Jenny Whitehouse in the role of Fraulein Blumenblatt. They both brought out the humour splendidly and caused much amusement for the audience.

The play was strongly directed by Peter who ensured that the pace never faltered, and he used his talented cast expertly.

It was interesting to see the slight differences from the original story; the hat shop now Madame Knorrs Fashion House in which tartan garments were sold, (plenty of fun there with the window displays) and the café scene is always an entertaining one. It was staged and acted very well.

Chris had done an excellent job on the costume front making for a beautifully dressed production.

Lighting was well plotted and executed and the sound department also ensured that the play was 'professionally' presented. The choice of music was good too.

Your programme is interesting and easy to read and I would suggest entering it for the poster/programme competition but unfortunately the NODA emblem is not above the write up on NODA. I understand that this is now a requirement for entry and perhaps something to bear in mind for next time.

Thank you for inviting me to see the play, which I thoroughly enjoyed, also for your usual hospitality on the evening and for Peter taking the time to chat with me in the interval.

I very much look forward to you next production in December.

E. Gloria Smith  
NODA Representative – District 12 -- South East Region