

Bartholomew Players 18th -21st May 2022

Ladies' Day by Amanda Whittington

What a gem of a play this is! Amanda Whittington's witty dialogue was brilliantly delivered by the very competent cast and skilfully directed by Debi Lisburn Diacon.

The cast of ladies, who work in a fish packing factory, in Hull gelled beautifully, with a mix of characters and emotions. Their trip to Ascot, in the year it was held in York, presented romantic opportunities for them, together with a change in fortunes for all of them. Jan (Navreet Dey) shone as the leader of the girls with superb comic timing and acting skills. Jan has her sights on Joe (Gareth Hammond) the foreman at the factory, but has never had the courage to approach him. She was wholly believable. Linda, the quieter one of the four was played very well by Liberty Foreman. She was oppressed by a demanding mother, but found her courage when swept off her feet by jockey, Patrick (Ianto Wain) fresh from Ireland with a very believable accent. Shelley (Becca Howard) was well cast and has illusions of stardom, falling prey to TV presenter Jim McCormack who was convincingly played by Nick Smith. Pearl, whose impending birthday occasioned the trip to the races in the first place, was excellently played by doyen, Lesley Robinson, despite having her arm in a sling. Pearl hid her secret affair and her disappointment at missing her paramour at the racecourse was tangible. Barry (Steve Ashcroft) did 'appear' eventually for one last dance to reassure Pearl of his intentions and that he had not survived a fall, which is why he had not turned up for their last couple of meetings. His final gift to her is to retrieve the discarded Tote ticket for her, which far from being worthless, turned out to be proof of their large win.

The accents were convincing and well maintained throughout. The scenery was well presented and slickly changed, transporting us from the fish-packing factory to the various areas of the racecourse with ease. The costume changes from factory overalls to racecourse finery was very superbly done, whilst the scene was being changed behind them

The dialogue throughout was very funny and well-delivered. The only slight difficulty was the factory noises sometimes overwhelmed Amanda Whittington's brilliant dialogue. Otherwise, the sound and lighting were excellent and appropriate.

The large first-night audience were very appreciative and rightly so.

Congratulations to director Debi Lisburn Diacon and all involved on another splendid production and we look forward to the next show

Nigel James