



ROSE BOWL ADJUDICATION

Name of Company: **THE TROWBRIDGE PLAYERS**

Name of Production: **'THE LADYKILLERS'**

Venue: Arc Theatre, Trowbridge

Date: Wednesday, 8th May 2019

Adjudicator: Laura Corradi Loughran

This was a good portrayal of a well-known play, providing an enjoyable and entertaining evening. In general the timing was well executed, making sure the comedic value of this farce was maintained throughout. The accents of each character were well chosen to represent stereotypical and somewhat exaggerated characters typical of the genre.

STAGING

The opening, with the policeman entering from the auditorium and exiting via the stage was a nice, simple introduction to the pace of life and lack of his urgency to see Mrs Wilberforce. I liked how this same motion was used at the end of the play.

Mrs Wilberforce could have taken her time when realising her mistake of her accusation of Mister Evans, it would have been interesting to see her thought process, the realisation on her face, before jumping straight into the next line.

Good use of props, and I enjoyed hearing the tinkering of china when Mrs Wilberforce was offstage preparing the tea.

The radio announcement was well conceived, perhaps the reader could have been more R.P on the pronunciation of the 'R' consonant. The authentic crackle was charming nostalgia. When Marcus was preparing his room it would have been nice to see him unpacking from a piece of luggage.

The arrival of each of the burglars was great, each of them had individual characterisations which gave clear and immediate differentiation. I particularly liked seeing Harry steal straight away and his continuous pill taking. It would have been nice to see an increased impatience from Mrs Wilberforce's constant interruptions. I did enjoy the rearranging of the bedroom furniture when orchestrating the plan. A highlight was the scene after the robbery when you all hid in the cupboard, this was farce at its finest. The conversation was perfectly timed, especially the delivery of the lines by Harry when he 'got lost' or the 'door was jammed.' There were some great detail in the direction, such as Professor Marcus re-straightening the picture and Louis patting Mrs Wilberforce on the head. Mrs Wilberforce's guests could have had more background chatter and excitement. The sound of the 'band' at the end of Act One was a great representation of extremely poor playing and strangely, I would have been happy to hear more.

The opening to Act Two with the finale of the concert was brilliant, and I enjoyed each reaction to meeting the guests afterwards. The discussion as to who should kill Mrs Wilberforce and the suggestion of the tournament was well executed and a great set up for the action that was to follow. One Round crashing Harry through the wooden bars was excellent, as was the knife in One Round's hat. It was a great example of good stage craftsmanship and a highlight of the segment. Louis being strangled by the light of a match was an excellent visual effect. The death of Professor Marcus could have been a little more dramatic as the final climax of the section. Overall the piece was well staged, traditional - but traditional for this style works.

As a note, I understand why productions like to use prompts, however if necessary I would advise having the prompt in the wings. Having cues delivered from the auditorium was distracting and conspicuous and took away from the continuity of the performance.

The set was traditional and in keeping with the style of the play. The use of a level SL for the Professor's room was good. The script describes Mrs Wilberforce's house as having 'florid wallpaper' and 'chintzy furnishing,' which would have helped bring the eccentricities of Mrs Wilberforce to life further. As it was, the set was rather safe in style. It would have been nice to have incorporated something other than a black curtain behind the window for extra authenticity, perhaps even the brick wall which we could see behind the front door when opened. The Professor's room lacked the feel of a bedroom, a longer piece of furniture to represent the bed on the back wall could have worked and you could have eliminated a couple of the chairs to free up a little space as most of the action looked cramped. It may have been worth moving the position of the stairs to the side of the main platform (centre stage, with the top of the stairs towards the audience), to free up space, this would also have enabled the door frame not to block any action as it would have been sideways on, and would have allowed us to see Mrs Wilberforce's facial reactions. The hiding place under the stairs, was well conceived.

It would have been good to have printed on each side of the prop money to make it look more authentic. The reveal of the rooftop was very well done and worked well.

Lighting was natural and unobtrusive throughout. The simplistic lighting plot was sufficient for this type of production and enhanced the setting and action, rather than detracting from it. The flashing of the lights synced well with the train sound effects. I enjoyed the recording of street sounds when entering the auditorium. The sound effects of General Gordon were well timed. Other effects such as the traffic, sirens and scene change music added interest and authenticity to the piece. The sound of the toilet when Harry drowned was comic and again impeccably timed.

Marcus' scarf was too long throughout Act 1, meaning he held on to it for the majority of the time, impeding his physical choices. I was pleased to see that this was rectified in Act Two. Mrs Wilberforce's yellow dress was a lovely choice. All costumes were in keeping with the style and period.

CAST

MRS LOUISA WILBERFORCE

This was an assured and safe performance. I would have liked you have explored her eccentric personality further, sometimes the character seemed understated in the action of this farce. You had good physicality when walking back and forth across the stage when interrupting the professor, however it would have been good to see a change when you were upset and your shock at discovering the truth of the robbery could have been greater, as could your reaction when you discovered it was you who transported the money. You did, however, portray her sweet but strict nature with charm, and I especially enjoyed your reaction to realising you could keep all of the money. We were rooting for you to have your 'happy ever after' and you did.

PROFESSOR MARCUS

You had control of the character and action at all times. The pace of your speech was suitable to your character and gave him a calculating edge. Take care on articulation, especially as this criminal was trying to appear extremely educated. I particularly enjoyed your speech introducing the concert, "Am I insane or a genius?" It was believable which enhanced the comedy further. You commanded the stage with authority. Well Done.

MAJOR COURTNEY

I enjoyed your bumbly nervous characterization. Your scene with the dress was highly comedic, and the follow up in act two with your enthusiasm when describing dresses was fantastic. A good contrast of character, enhanced by excellent physicality well sustained throughout.

HARRY ROBINSON

This was an enjoyable portrayal of a typical, cockney 'jack-the-lad'. Your reactions to the Major's dress antics were natural and comical. I enjoyed your obsessive nature of taking the

pills after the robbery, which added a nice physical dynamic to your character. Your delivery of your background story at the beginning of act two came across with spontaneity, with an ability to charm. You provided the production with an energy which kept up the pace. Well Done.

ONE-ROUND

I enjoyed your performance as the imbecile of the group. Your turn around at the end of the piece showing how strong you could be as a thug was excellent, as was your reaction in the mirror to the knife in your hat. You could have been a little louder throughout to ensure your gags were heard, but a solid performance.

LOUIS HARVEY

The darkness of your character had resemblance to The Mafia, and was a good contrast to the other characters. Your delivery of your speech about running a Romanian orphanage was perfection, "Won't somebody please think of the children," with moody contempt was a highlight of your portrayal, as was your unwillingness to converse with Mrs Wilberforce and the other guests.

CONSTABLE MCDONALD and MRS JANE TROMLEYTON

These were both soundly played and supported the main cast well. I enjoyed the busy body attitude of Jane and the kind and patient demeanor of the constable. Mrs Wilberforce's guests also enhanced the action, but a bit more chatter would have been good, their excitement when meeting the 'musicians' was well done.

Congratulations to you all on a successful and enjoyable evening.

Thank you for your warm welcome and your hospitality on the day and I look forward to many more performances.