

## **"BLITHE SPIRIT" – Dunstable Rep**

Once again we were entertained well by this Rep production – with the three main characters giving us excellent performances. However, I felt that for a Noel Coward play it lacked a light touch, it was too serious overall, and needed to be a little more light and frothy!

When I say that the two lead ladies were Angela Goss and Anna Carter-Brown playing Madame Acarti and Ruth Condomine respectively – the calibre of the acting can be judged by that!

Matt Flitton was very well-suited to the part of Charles Condomine – a rather affected but charming gentleman – who looked good and mostly acted well, although he did lose the character from time and time. Matt was the real man about town in his evening suit – but the clothes he wore when he had his arm in a sling were not typical of the era – his trousers and waistcoat did not meet – showing a great expanse of shirt – which was not quite right, two small things in an otherwise good performance.

Angela looked so right for the rather fey Madame Acarti – a super portrayal with lots of well-thought out nuances. Her realisation that she'd managed to call down a spirit was beautifully done – we had all the emotions there, and some wonderful facial expressions which really brought the character to life – another triumph for Angela! Loved the costumes too – very in keeping with the character.

Anna gave us a lovely interpretation of Ruth, the wife. Always forthright – but gradually going from the agreeable wife to being very forceful when the ghost of Charles first wife appears and starts upsetting their relationship. Anna looked lovely, great hairstyle and her first costume particularly was very flattering, however I would like to have seen her in a colour, as the set was a little dull, and needed a brighter costume to contrast.

Kate Redding played Elvira – the ghost of Charles first wife – and looked very ethereal. She also gave a good characterisation, showing her meddling ways. The interaction between Ruth and Elvira in both incarnations was very good, some lovely facial expressions helped create and sustain their portrayals.

Sue Young and Alistair Brown as Dr and Mrs Bradman – provided a good contrast to the main characters with good portrayals. Sue's costume in Act 1 was very colourful, and suited to the ambience of the piece.

Jenny Monaghan played the maid Edith – I thought she gave a very good performance, and got the essence of the character and the sense of the era very well.

The set was a bit solid and drab for the era and the ethos of the play, although it was well-constructed – I wasn't too keen on the sofa in the middle of the stage, slightly offset would have added a little interest to the set.

So all in all a good production, but it could have been brilliant because of the calibre of the acting if it had been a little bit lighter and brighter in all areas.

***Nova Horley***