

Group: Church Crookham Players
Show: A Witches Brew Venue: Crookham War Memorial Hall
Date: Saturday 14th May 2011

Directors: Pam Gutteridge



The Church Crookham Players have put together three one act plays with the common theme of witchcraft. The first, **Witches** by Margaret Wood is set in the 17th century and demonstrates how the love of one man and the ensuing jealousy can result in disastrous consequences. The second play, **The 500th WAC**, by Frank Bruce, is a light-hearted look at the difficulties encountered in recruitment and finding a suitable candidate for sacrifice! The third play, **After Midnight and Before Dawn**, by David Camplin, questions why people in the 17th century were arrested for witchcraft and whether there is indeed a witch amongst the six condemned.

Theatre Ambience: The theatre had been decorated with some very interesting posters representing scenes of witchcraft and the arrest and punishment of suspected witches.

Front of House: The front of house staff extended a warm welcome.

The Programme: the 8-page programme was simply produced but had a great deal of interesting information both about witches, the plays and the Players. The pen pictures were illuminating and indicated the wide age-range and experience of the cast.

Scenery/Set: The problem of setting three different plays was overcome most effectively. The basic set was black with a set of blocks which were arranged variously for each play. The cottage set for the first play was simple but adequate an indication that often "less is more". The tea rooms for the second play involved a couple of tables with tea-things and a flower display at the back. The final play set in a prison cell had a most effective gobo for the cell window and straw strewn across the stage. All the sets created a dramatic scene.

Make Up: All characterisations were effective and appropriate.

Costume: The contrast between each of the plays was well maintained and all the costumes contributed to the characterisation of each of the players.

Properties: The relatively minimalist creation of each set led to the props being most important. The director achieved a good balance between set dressing and vital properties.

Lighting & Sound: The lighting and sound effects were most apt and used judiciously. The two lights on the tabs did however display quite a bit of flickering. This may be worth checking out.

The Production: These three plays constitute a very ambitious programme for any group. Every member of the cast was, however, very focused. They created and

established each of their characters exceedingly well particularly those in all three plays. This was a poignant and thought provoking evening provided by some very talented cast and crew.

Thank you for your hospitality and I look forward to joining you again.

A short review will appear in due course in the South-East section of Amateur Stage and in the South-East section of the NODA website.

The NODA magazine is now called Theatre Business and can be accessed through the NODA website <http://www.noda.org.uk/>

Kay Rowan
District 14 Regional Representative