

A warm greeting from the president (Christine Mullord) to an evening with Robyn Hood and his Merry Men, yes that's right Robyn a lady welcomed me to spend some time in Sherwood Forest, or that is what I thought. When the show opened to a well-presented Margaret Thatcher, I was intrigued to learn more about where this story was leading me. I was certainly not disappointed in this excellent start on the escapades of an amateur musical theatre societies attempts to perform "The Ballad of Robyn Hood."

Two WLOG members, Ian Cook (Director) and Ian Newton (Musical Director) took three years to develop the plot and devised this outstanding musical comedy during lockdown and had its world premiere at Beccles Public Hall, which I was privileged to attend on Thursday April 28th 2022. I really enjoyed the clever musical theatre references. Because The Ballad of Robyn Hood was a play within a play, the cast took on the challenge of multi characterisations with enthusiasm.

Felicity/Robyn Hood (Bonnie Quinlan) and Ryan/Will Scarlett (Kyle Mace) developed the love interest in both situations 'on and off stage' effectively. Maureen Desmond/Margaret Thatcher (Jayne Andrew) achieved the fine balance of 'thwarting' the performance of Robyn Hood to promote her own show 'Eva' (Hitlers Mistress) with great comedy and hilarious consequences. Simone (Helen Cook) presented the perfect sidekick and confidante to Maureen. Hugo McCavity/The Sheriff (Bob Sharman) and Sandra/Maid Marian (Sophie Cannell) created a love/hate relationship and the effortless transition of Hugo to Sheriff with a song and costume change was excellent. The Merry Men song was delightful and well received.

The use of staging and scenery was simple, but effective and the committee scene was typical and everyone could be seen at all times. Although the story line became complicated at times, the clear diction from all members of the cast provided a good understanding of the plot for the audience.

The choreography (Jean Cator) was apt for the style and appropriate to the era, but ensure to use all use of spacing. The lighting, for me, needed to vary in areas lit and there were too many blackouts, characterisations need to continue until the stage is vacated. The costumes were exceptional and I really liked the bohemian touch, the show within a show style and the variation of colour with the day wear.

At times the music microphone balance was too loud and care for microphones is needed when a person is backstage. When two people are speaking to each other by mobile phone on stage there is a need to finish the conversation before 'hanging up'. My personal opinion is details are very important and 'real props', for example darts in a club room are a necessity but because darts would be a safety issue, maybe a different choice of activity would have been better. A little attention to detail is matching shoes to a costume and tidy hairstyles. These could possibly have been a little more appropriate.

The whole cast looked like they were really having a good time and enjoying themselves with lots of smile, I'm not surprised as the show was a delightful, happy and memorable evening's entertainment for all.

Congratulations to everyone involved in The Ballad of Robyn Hood.