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## **BLODS**

**'Allo 'Allo by Jeremy Lloyd & David Croft**

**BLODS Little Theatre**

**Manor Barn Bexhill**

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Director: Simon Meeson**

**MD: Oscar Smith**

French ambiances from the moment of arrival with Oscar Smith MD on his accordion playing outside – no rain this night. He also accompanied the sensational hair rolled Edith as she performed her 'Fifi' cabaret act supported by saucy waitresses Mimi and Yvette. Good work Marion.

One room – a café – a very special café which was a typical wartime French café owned by the welcoming René Artois even before the actual commencement of the production. Assisted by his wife Edith they are keeping a priceless portrait of van Klomp's Fallen Madonna with ze Big Boobies hidden in a Knockwurst 'sausarge' in ze cellar!

The Little Theatre totally lent itself for us the audience to be immersed in the action. Tables of four complete with cloth and flowers, a raised platform for German business, stairs to the bedroom behind. A bar fully stocked, chalk board on the wall, a great flap hiding an airman, plus beaded exit. Central exit/entrance door to the Rue d'Remarques and two windows well dressed with lace and curtains tied back either side. To the right hooks for Rene's trench mac and homburg plus the upright piano. The windows were used for surprising athletic appearances and disappearances. Lace drapes disguised the techy desk operated by Airman alias Callum Pelling who handled the effects with perfect timing. The ramp to the theatre bar area was well used and in particular Leclerc's kitchen played by Michael Turnbull who also appeared in other garbs as a cockatoo seller and yet another Hitler! At the far end were two doors and a working area for the Col. Kurt Von Strohm's office, Herr Otto Flick's office and the back row of the cinema complete with screen.

Full of details in decor and props in abundance – garlic strings, a wonderful blow up Hitler, stuffed edams, swastika flags, exploding cigars, a caged stuffed cockatoo doubling as a resistance radio, the enormous 'sausarge', a fireplace with painting above, night lights, old telephones, a great framed photograph of Edith, naming but a few, Sam Lewis took on the excellent costuming, also appearing as a hidden airman popping up here and there, even sporting a red wig and a dress!

Peter Elliot from start to finish gave his all with constant patter, great confidence, speed of script utilizing the whole room to move from scene to scene – he was the anchor. Inuendo was plentiful – facial expressions, frustration tension 'not to be shot' beautifully expressed by

ruffling his hair. Great characterisation. He mocked dear Edith, flirted with cheeky little Mimi saucily played by Evangeline Clifford together with Yvette – newcomer confident Bethany East. who responded both sexually and jealously. He was eyed by the camp Lieutenant Gruber minced well by Dean Charleton. Tamara Leggitt – smart in uniform, plaited blond hair Helga Geerhart was under the spell of Herr Otto Flick and paired well with Chris Eyre giving an excellent straight faced, stiff legged whole room tango demo together with impressive push ups and dubious violin bowing! Paul Goring – we had a chuckle made a fine German Colonel especially in his hairpiece enhancing his appeal, working so well with Captain Bertorelli – Andrew Fletcher as the red-blooded Italian, sporting numerous medals and splendid feathers.

Chris Leech worked at a slower pace to ensure British spy Officer Crabtree's wonderful mispronunciations – his 'good moanings' and his 'pimps' were delivered with aplomb. Ruth Parsons pursed her lips superbly as Michell Dubois in her trench mac and beret disguise sometimes even a moustache and perfected her 'listen very carefully, I shall say this only once' in her role as the local resistance leader. The production team headed by Director Simon Meeson – also performing the imposing German character General Schmelling guided this most talented group and together with SM Mike Neeson created a hugely enjoyable, professional and 'sell out' 'Allo 'Allo. Thank you all for the much needed evening out, full of laughter.

Thanks too, go to 'Les Girls' of the bar, raffle organiser and Box Office and all the members we don't always see – it's très bien to be back – merci.

A precis of this Review will be posted on the NODA website shortly.

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