

BLODS

'Are You Being Served?' by Jeremy Lloyd & David Croft

BLODS Hall

Manor Barn, Bexhill

Thursday 11th August 2022

Director: Simon Meeson

Immersive theatre certainly suits this Little Theatre and Director Simon Meeson, together with Assistant Amber Ablitt once again created a successful production of Lloyd and Croft's 70's OTT TV hit. This episode presents the motley crew of Grace Brother's Departmental Store preparing to enter into the spirit of merchandising German goods and the antics of a staff holiday to Spain, resulting in chaos, flowing double entendres, slapstick, good old British 'seaside' humour with the ten members of the cast creating memorable outrageous characters and of course the delivery of long-lasting catch phrases like – "I'm free"

Graeme Lake created a pompous Captain Peacock persona, who headed the sales force, whilst Anne Hutchings totally convincingly became multi-coloured hairdo head of Ladies Fashion Mrs Slocombe – much attached to her pussy and with great British bloomers (as in knickers) that saved the day. Ruth Parsons, her Assistant was young Miss Brahms sometimes Liszt, was given to wonderful facial expressions of misunderstanding and chewed well throughout. Paul Goring suited and bespectacled looked on in bemusement during most of the riotous proceedings as Mr Rumbold. Senior Assistant of Menswear was Mr Humphries, with Sam Lewis doing justice to the John Inman deliciously camp role and a dap hand with the tape measure too. Oscar Smith became the cheeky young Mr Lucas full of pranks – particularly good moment with the chattering false teeth in the model's underpants and using his musical talent in the accordion playing piece. Mr Grainger – had a digestive problem throughout and Andy Mould held his pained expression so well whilst trying to contain loud report unsuccessfully! Wonderful appearance in gabardine raincoat and bowler hat even in Spain! Doubling up for a most amusing dissatisfied customer wrong sizing episode was Sharon Gordon and then as Conchita, Spanish hotel waitress. Lastly Simon also played two characters again a customer and a strong uniformed, gun wheeling Cesar – a revolutionary Don Juan. With huge amounts of fast script and athletic business rehearsals must have been hysterical.

Our host was again the greatest ad libber I know and before proceeding Mr Mash namely Peter Elliot was caretaking with his J cloth and bucket and titillating the lingerie display with his feather duster, chatting to the audience arrivals in the garden and then later became Don Bernardo, Spanish 1\* hotel manager using a great guttural accent. Wonderfully funny throughout.

The room was set as a store with two counters depicting Menswear and Ladies Fashions, one end two well designed and created sliding lift doors with arrival bells well timed. The windows and door were curtained. Replacing the lifts were several 'tenthouses' used for manic entry and exits and a prominent toilet flush and handle – however no door therefore interesting renditions

of musical engaged singing. The audience was seated in two rows down the length of the hall with some audience crosswise where the sound desk with very good sound and lighting created by Callum Pelling. The realistic 70's costumes were designed and created by Sam Lewis as well as set design and props. Loved the pink suit, handbag and fan. Now to the dancing and the costumes to match. Lederhosen in differing sizes with embroidered straps perfect and to Choreographer Sophia Levre-White you trained the Grace Brothers dancing troupe to perfection with their Schuhplattler.

To the whole team, performers, technicians, F of H et al, thank you from us both for another immersive evening's entertainment despite the great heat we've been having and we look forward to another exciting future programme.

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

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