



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Wadhurst Dramatic Club
Volunteers a comedy by Hilary Mackelden
Wadhurst Memorial Hall
Friday 23rd October 2015
Director: Wendy Barr

This comedy set within a charity shop was written by local author Hilary Mackelden, who was present at this performance. Brenda is the charity shop manager, who is assisted by partially sighted retired Denny and often befuddled Prue, an expert in malapropism. Area manager Claire, supposedly Brenda's friend, is besotted by the new CEO one John Turk. He plans to bring in the young and get rid of the old. He takes on an unlikely young offender to serve her hours of community service, leaving Brenda to deal with her, as well as discharge the oldies, but will she?

FRONT OF HOUSE: Kindly met and entertained by Director **Wendy Barr**, with **John Northover** performing Front of House duties and Club Supporters selling programmes. **Amanda Dann** headed the running of the Bar assisted again by Club Supporters.

PROGRAMME: **Louise Barr** was responsible for the poster and programme design. The stiff carded A5 booklet had the most attractive and clever corner to corner coloured lettering of Volunteers, with each letter made up of articles you would find in the charity shops, for example the 'V' was an upside pair of denim jeans, the 'L' a pile of books, a box plus a picture, the 'T' a sweater with outreaching arms, with a skirt under. So very clever. There could perhaps have been a longer synopsis, but the content was explicit, the NODA crest appeared, biogs with the colour photos were good, with added comical cast members and really good advertising for Wadhurst's 70th year with their forthcoming productions.

SCENERY: How lucky you are in having such a talented pair **Nancy** and **Colin Hand** to create such a super charity shop. With an angled shop door on one side, fitting room complete with curtains and staffroom on the other and a perfect counter on which the till sat - a comedy in itself. The added dimension of the articles beautifully painted on the walls which then left the rest of the stage to be festooned with all manner of merchandise, clothes rails and dummies, bags of donated items. Even at the front of the stage were set purchasable items. What a splendid job Props Mistress **Annie Sutton** did. Perhaps you could have village hall sale! **Paul Desrosiers** SM had the job of keeping the shop in order during the short blackouts between the scenes.

COSTUMES: The cast were responsible for their own costumes and I must say each looked comfortable and in character. The change in weather was well dealt with even wet raincoats – realistic. Shoes perfect. Make up, hair styling and Denny's wig were natural. There was an excellent make over and hair do for Prue by **Judy Alexander** and the cast members, and the hair extensions and face piercings certainly gave Leanne attitude!

SOUND/LIGHTING: Lighting and Sound was operated by efficient **John Bush** once again – a good choice of opening and incidental music from Pet Shop Boys, McCartney and Pink Floyd with Money and Charity Shop. Good clear clinking of the till, shop door bell and script came over well.

THE PRODUCTION: A couple of prompts were required by **Judy Alexander** and there was some interesting ad libbing going on which overcame some script issues, but slowed down the pace. This said, **Wendy** achieved a good all round presentation of this funny yet poignant comedy. Leanne was interpreted well 'with attitude' by **Daisy Gould** then softening and contrasting so well with

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

Tel 01733 374 790 Fax 01733 237 286 Email info@noda.org.uk Web www.noda.org.uk

Twitter @NODAtweets Facebook NationalOperaticDramaticAssociation

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sometimes flustered Prue, gently played by **Heather Woodward**, who blossomed with the youngster's makeover. **Wendy** introduced some great miming moments including Customer **Dot Symtherman's** sneaking items into her bag when she thought no-one was looking! **Merlin Beedell** using his characteristic arm movements together with great facial expressions was the ageist CEO, whilst **Jan Lynam** playing Area Manager Claire hung on his every word of company jargon and fell in love with him! **Jill Haskell** – played the obnoxious Customer, who travelled miles to purchase second-hand items, came across with strength especially after discovering it was actually her husband Claire was having an affair with! **Catherine Whitehead** convincingly played retired, short sighted Denny who sussed the CEO and revealed he was in 'figures' but not those on paper but those of a shop window. **Peter Dwyer** played The Flasher – anticipated his excitement and accidentally knocked over a mannequin! Brenda was played very sympathetically by **Grainne Murphy**, worked her magic on till opening, proved her strength and kept her team. **Katie Driver** was a confident weekly dress exchanger whilst **Gill Gordon-Williams** was the flamboyant am-dram costume mistress.

Thank you for your hard work and hospitality Wadhurst. A précis of this review will be posted on the NODA website shortly.