

BRANTHAM AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY

Look Out He's Got A Gun by Phil Mansell

Co-Directors Lisa Butler and Lauren Carrigan.

Producer Lisa Butler

Choreographer Megan Palmer.

Performed at Brantham Village Hall on Friday 17th July 2026 at 7.30pm.

I was welcomed on arrival by first time Co-Directors Lisa Butler and Lauren Carrigan and met with them during the interval and again after the performance.

This is a relatively new play published in 2019 and is a spoof comedy set in the 1950s. It was fast moving and very funny and the audience was fully engaged from the beginning! The imaginative set, built by the society, was essentially the Purple Cockatoo Nightclub and bar and there were a vast number of scene changes with all props moved very slickly on and off stage whilst atmospheric music was played. The story revolved around the unexplained kidnapping of twenty seven women from the premises over a period of time and the apparent inability of Scotland Yard to identify the perpetrator(s). The decision was made to call in a crime writer / amateur sleuth and his wife to help solve the crimes.

A baffled and plodding Inspector Scott was ably characterised by Richard Heath. Enter Steve Dexter and his wife Eve colourfully and skilfully played by Arjan Van Heuvein and his real life wife, Hayley. What a 'posh' and ebullient couple they were and both had great stage presence. There were many characters associated with the nightclub some of whom appeared genuine and some possible suspects. Clare Fraser-Hopewell was a glamorous announcer who introduced each scene often with some give away facial expressions! Engaged couple Hugo Bentley, well played by Ben Cook, and Fiona von Strudelberger, demurely played by Megan Palmer were enjoying a quiet drink and a dance. Hugo was distracted by a phone call and, on return, found that Fiona had disappeared, presumed kidnapped. I enjoyed the role of Archie well captured by Keith Raby who always seemed to be mixing and drinking Martinis and the shiftiness of Lofty Shorthouse characterised well by Alan Jones. The seedy owner of the nightclub was Brad Madison well played by Mike Brown. Scott Dolling was a believable crazy Professor Otto van Strudelberger and father of Fiona whilst Peter Earl played the crooked American businessman Sir Magnus Wolfe engaged in producing large cardboard containers. Both these characters were hugely suspicious ! A sexy nightclub singer Consuela Ramirez was glamorously played by Elizabeth Diamond .

There was a hilarious scene when both Fiona and Eve (who had also been kidnapped earlier) were trying to escape their handcuffs and ropes and Eve dealt most effectively with the henchmen guards and club owner. Nice one !

There were several smaller roles and some actors took on two roles. However every role was vital to the twists and turns of this plot contributing different angles

Megan Palmer had choreographed a few straightforward dance routines and movements which all worked well and good use was made of the stage. Huge congratulations to Co-Directors Lisa Butler and Lauren Carrigan for their great ideas and creativity in bringing this comedy to stage. This really was a fun evening and the audience loved it. Well done to everyone involved.

**Hazel Hole MBE
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