

Out of Order

Brantham Amateur Theatrical Society

At Brantham Village Hall, on 6th July 2019.

A Play

Director and producer - Angie Heath

Report by Catherine Dixey, NODA E12 Regional Representative

Out of Order, written by Ray Cooney in 1990, is an hilarious comedy, revolving around the main character Richard Willey, a Conservative Government junior minister who plans to spend an illicit evening in the Westminster Hotel with Jane, a typist from the Opposition party. However things go disastrously wrong as the evening progresses. Richard tries to avoid embarrassing situations with the help of his innocent personal private secretary, George Pigden, as they get embroiled in the fast moving, ever increasingly tangled web of lies and deceit. During the course of the evening, more and more characters are introduced, even some imaginary ones invented on the spur of the moment, as Richard tries to smooth out the situation and not surprisingly, ends up making it worse.

Keith Raby plays Richard Willey with great enthusiasm, producing endearing moments, along with flashes of real in-sight as he tries to diffuse the situation. There were however, some hesitations in his delivery unfortunately, which though perhaps forgivable considering the size and complexity of his part, did slow the pace down, particularly in the 1st Act.

Arjan van Heuveln as George Pigden, in this his first full length play, is confident, funny and exasperated by the situations he finds himself in. He is to be congratulated on the painful expressions and poses he produces throughout, perfectly reflecting his character visually.

Mike Brown, the hotel waiter is totally convincing in his role, with his dead pan expression and spot on timing in his responses demonstrating, I am sure, a wealth of experience on the stage.

Sophie Mercer as Jane, the typist, both looks and reflects the part of the secret lover. She captures the essence of her character, as does Ben Cook who plays Ronnie her cheated 'bruiser' of a husband, who is trying to get to the bottom (quite literally) of what is going on.

Worthy of mention are all the rest of the cast who worked hard, and fitted into the scenario perfectly, without exception. The pace really picked up in Act 2, much improving the comedy aspect, there being much joviality as scantily clad people were running around, in and out of doors and windows and hiding in cupboards. The perfect farce situation.

The set worked well despite the small stage creating its own problems, with lots of action going on. Much of the comedy revolved around a sash window in the hotel room, that temperamentally kept closing causing accidents and injury to those characters trying to escape through it.

Well done to BATS for staging this challenging production. The audience certainly appreciated the comedy writing.