



Group: Loddon Players
Show: Love Begins At Fifty
Venue: Sherfield-On-Loddon Village Hall
Date: Tuesday 19th April 2016
Director: Pete Cook & Peter Francis

Love Begins At Fifty is an hilarious farce written by Raymond Hopkins. The comedy is set in the home of Anita and Clive Debanks who have been married for 28 years and the passage of the play covers a six week period leading up to Clive's 50th birthday. Clive endeavours to recapture his youth with a foray into a "lonely hearts column". His wife, Anita, enters the loveless couple into a competition for the perfect married couple, to win a 6 week Caribbean cruise without telling her husband. The grand finale is reached following several complications, misunderstandings and coincidences which form an integral part of this farce.

Front of House: -

Theatre Ambience: The hall was laid out in theatre style with plenty of room between rows.

The Programme: The A5 programme is well constructed and contains all the relevant information. In the programme it states that "The Players are members of NODA" rather than "Affiliated to NODA". The welcome for new members is very encouraging.

Scenery/Set/Properties: The stage is set in the lounge of the DeBanks couple and is tastefully dressed in furniture, pictures and artefacts as befits that of a pair who have been married for so long.

Make-Up & Costumes: The play was set in the modern day and a great deal of trouble had been taken to ensure each character was appropriately dressed from top to toe on all the scenes.

Lighting & Sound Effects: The sound effects were very well managed particularly the door bell which didn't seem to stop ringing but was always spot on cue. The lighting could have been slightly stronger at the front of the stage particularly DSL for the action with the goldfish.

The Production: Despite the fact that I attended the final dress rehearsal the standard was extremely high. It was vital that there was not a weak link in the cast and I was not to be disappointed. The essential characterisation of each member of the cast was well-developed and as the play progressed so that the developing relationships seemed to enhance the characters. Each and every character maintained their persona throughout and the two directors, both of whom were in the cast, are to be congratulated on this their first production. Both Pete Cook and Peter Francis are very experienced actors and equipped themselves in the dual roles of actor and director so extremely well that I am sure we will see them in these roles again in the future. I am convinced that the audience will only serve to lift the players' performances to even greater heights and that the laughter will truly ring out at Sherfield Village Hall as this farce is played out this week.

A short review will appear in due course on the NODA website.

Kay Rowan - NODA SE Councillor