

BILLY LIAR SPECIAL

NOISES OFF

ANOTHER SELL-OUT; ANOTHER HIT



APS's summer show *Billy Liar* always promised to be a hit. The cheery poster, designed by MillieAnne Hyde, promised an evening redolent of Sixties nostalgia and sheer good fun. Our loyal audiences, present in such large numbers for all

recent shows, were wise enough to get their tickets early, and sure enough, every seat for the final five performances had been sold by the start of the production week (a tiny number were vacant on the Monday), with

disappointed would-be patrons once more vying for returns and cancellations. John Crabtree designed yet another stunning set, constructed in record time by the usual team of Mark Lambert and Adrian Hole, with assistance from



Adrian Harding, Patrick Naughton and Beth Yates. Jane Williams had put in a lot of time and effort to improve the bar experience, and there is no doubt that the introduction of new lines such as ice-creams and gin & tonic proved extremely popular, not only with the audiences, but also the cast and crew. Once Covid had done its best to decimate both cast members and technicians in the run-up to the show (they recovered in time!) everything was in position for a hugely positive week of summer fun. And so it proved.

However, there is a lot more to *Billy Liar* than surface comedy, (although the volume of laughter clearly showed how much the audiences enjoyed the frequent absurdities and nonsense, the ridiculous situations brought about by Billy's constant fantasising, his

inability to engage with the mundane realities of daily existence, and, obviously, his compulsive lying.) There are certainly may laugh-aloud moments. But Keith Waterhouse created this character with a purpose to do more than provide laughs. Written in the period between the end of the war and the start of rock 'n roll, when the word "teenager" had barely been thought of (apparently first used by Bill Haley and the Comets in 1957), Waterhouse observed the plight of young men and women desperate to break away and find - or create - their own identities. Living the same lives, adopting the same values, doing the same jobs - even wearing the same clothes - as their parents and grandparents - was creating tensions and pressures. It is this tension that the play

explores in its more serious moments, particularly through the explosive rows between Billy and his father, and through the detailed fantasy world which Billy describes inhabiting with his only serious girlfriend Liz, during the beautifully quiet and serious scene between the two of them in the third act.

It is to the great credit of the director, Jessica Colson, and her talented cast, that this performance did full justice to both the comic and the sombre aspects of the script. Liam Beard - back from his studies a year after giving us both Romeo and Orsino in our garden Shakespeare - tackled this huge role of Billy with energy and sparkling confidence, sometimes dashing around like a manic Basil Fawlty, at other times, shrunken and defeated. APS debutante Fiona Holt played the aggravating

(but also pathetic) grandmother to perfection; Robson Williamson brought us genuine north-country wit and spirit in Billy's friend Arthur, while Jemima Cheleda another APS first-timer - beautifully portrayed the hard part of Liz, the girl who didn't fit a stereotype, and who was therefore the only one attractive to Billy. Georgia Holt has clearly cornered the APS market for brassy blondes and made the role her own,

reflection and tenderness. Finally, the youngest cast member, Hazel Perrett, as Barbara, belied her years with a performance oozing confidence, and promising a great future on the stage. If she can handle eating numerous oranges, resisting amorous advances, dreaming of improbably blissful futures, and physically wrestling with other girls over disputed engagement rings all at the same time - then surely she

supportive and eager to learn, to fit in and to contribute to the overall endeavour. Congratulations to Jessica, and to all the cast and crew.

Footnote: it was reported in the last Noises Off that a matinée performance would be given on the Saturday. In the event, that was called off, and we would like to apologise to those customers who were disappointed. We are, however, absolutely committed to giving a matinée performance of our September production.



obviously relishing the opportunity to fling loud and bizarre insults at all and sundry. Siân Spencer demonstrated her versatility and ability to master accents superbly, giving us an utterly convincing strong-minded but still put-upon Yorkshire Woman, despairing of her wayward son. Richard Culham brought real power and anger to Geoffrey's stand-up rows with his son, giving a perfect demonstration of the bafflement and rage arising from their impossibly wide generation gap. He also gave us moments of quiet

can handle anything!

The really great news for APS is that four of the cast of eight were on the APS stage for the first time, and five of them were very much of the "younger generation"! How we would love to be able to see them all back with us in the future.

This was from the beginning, and despite Covid and other absences, term-times and work commitments making rehearsals difficult, a very happy production, with the entire team unselfishly



NEXT SHOW...

"KEEPING OUR END UP"

We are pleased to say that the audition process for our next production, *Keeping Our End Up*, was very successful. The show will take place in the last week of September, with the following cast:

Sarah Webster (Ursula Fewings); **Jessica Colson** (Ronnie Palmer); **MilleAnne Hyde** (Jan Broomfield); **Jane Pitts** (Fee McGregor); and **Gilly Savage** (Joan Right). Congratulations to these ladies. Rehearsals are starting immediately, and further details will, of course, be sent out in due course.



DARE TO DREAM.....



This is the future for your Theatre!

Our present seating, which was given to us free many years ago (when it was already well past its Best Before Date), is rapidly falling apart, with more and more of the seats being held together with gaffer tape and crossed fingers. It is a terrible shame that our lovely building, which audience members speak so positively about, is so sadly let down by its shabby - almost embarrassing - seating.

The Committee is determined to set a target to replace these seats with modern purpose-built auditorium seating as soon as possible. To that end, discussions are taking place as to how to fund

this project, and in which avenues to seek support. As an APS member, your annual subscription is of course greatly appreciated, but unfortunately is only a drop in the ocean of our ongoing running costs (insurance, maintenance, and in particular, heating). Our productions normally show a modest profit (after outgoings such as performing licence fees, alcohol licence fees, set construction materials, costumes, publicity, printing etc), but nowhere near enough to accumulate sufficient funds for capital projects such as new seating.

This is the main reason that we began our 100 Club a few months ago, and why we will continue to appeal to all APS members - as well as friends, visitors and audience members - to join the 100 Club. At the cost of a few pennies a day (which you will surely never notice) - you stand a chance of winning up to £100 every two months. And the estimated prize fund for the 2022 Christmas draw presently guarantees a prize in December of no less than £139, in addition to the

two-monthly prize. Meanwhile the APS will, by the end of 2022, have benefited to the tune of more than £1100 (and even more in future years). These funds are ring-fenced to support the purchase of the new seating. More members would mean bigger prizes!

So **PLEASE**, take a little time and trouble to join us as a member of the 100 Club. You will find all the necessary details in the

“Support Us” page of the APS website - there is a simple form to complete, and you will need to arrange a standing order with your bank - which you can cancel at any time, of course.

If you don't wish to commit to an ongoing membership of the Club, but still wish to support our seating fund, you can always make a stand-alone donation. Again, details are on the Support Us page. Thank you in advance!

WELCOME...

We are delighted to welcome these new members to APS: **Yvonne Ratcliffe, Caroline Wallace, Hazel Perrett and David Pileri**. We hope you will have a long and active association with APS.

We also welcome five new members of the 100 Club: **Raymond Wood, Geoffrey Martyn, Daphne Martyn, Caroline Wallace and Andrew Wallace**. Thank you for your support, and good luck in the draws!

