

Barton Players

A Christmas Carol

Director Kirsty Badham

Choreography Chloe Badham, Mimi Greenfield-Ginger

Barton Village Hall November 29th 2011

This was a very enjoyable evening.

The stage setting was simple, the background of the large ornate clock face inventive and entirely appropriate. Good lighting captured the varying settings. Costumes were in period, set the scene well and were very colourful.

This was a very large cast but Kirsty had ensured that they were well rehearsed; exits, entrances and movement on stage looked natural and spontaneous. The ensemble cast played a major part in the success of this musical. I was enormously impressed by their enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. The pace of the piece was good, scene changes were slick and quick so there was no interruption to the story telling.

Of course most of us know this story and have our own mental images. Kirsty effectively brought those images to life. Harold Liberty as Scrooge epitomised the character. This was a successful but controlled performance which perhaps could have shown more the extremes of Scrooge's responses to the ghostly visions. Scrooge was supported by talented actors. The Cratchit family were excellent. Matthew Ayres as Tiny Tim was particularly well cast. Christine Ayres and Jason Wolfe as Mr and Mrs Cratchit were especially effective in demonstrating the warmth and love of the family. There were other successful performances too from Mr and Mrs Fezziwig, the ghost of Christmas Present, Young Scrooge and Belle. It was impressive that so many minor characters were captured vividly. Debbie Radcliffe and Jo Hamilton as Mrs Dilber and Mrs Filch, were outstanding in bringing these two humorous characters to life.

Kirsty used backing music for this show. This can be a hazardous procedure. Any musical mistakes are difficult to rectify. However Kirsty had taken care, the cast were very well prepared, there were no hitches and

the songs and musical backing to scenes were very effective. I did not know this piece but the tuneful music and appropriate lyrics captured the changing moods of the piece. Tiny Tim's prayer was very moving, the duet between Scrooge and young Scrooge was well staged and most successful, and the chorus numbers epitomised the joy of a Victorian celebration.

It is always challenging to present a well loved and well known piece of theatre so that it remains fresh and vivid. Kirsty was entirely successful in achieving this. Barton Players are to be congratulated on the size, enthusiasm and talents of their cast.

Enid Cooper
NODA Representative
District 2