

A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum

Stephen Sondheim

Director Gill George

Barton Village Hall October 29th 2009

This Sondheim musical offers many opportunities for amateur groups and director Gill George used these opportunities to produce an entertaining performance. In a simple but effective set, Gill ensured that the action of the musical moved smoothly.

John Murphy as Pseudolus gave a confident and comic performance. Pseudolus is the key central character and John certainly fulfilled this role. He is a relaxed performer and enjoyable to watch, he used facial and physical mannerisms to good effect in his portrayal of the quick thinking, opportunist slave. John's versatility and comic abilities were a major contribution to the success of the evening's entertainment. Andy Gookey gave another strong comic performance as the nervous, fastidious slave Hysterium. The character was well drawn and provided a good contrast to Pseudolus. These actors worked well together to provide much humour.

There was good support too from the rest of the cast. The stereotypical characters were well cast, and remained in character, providing contrasts throughout the play. Harold Liberty - Senex, Clare Brown - Domina, Richard Smith - Miles Gloriosus, and Mick George - Erronius, in particular were able to extract much humour from their characters.

Musically, the group were less confident. Their use of pre - recorded music imposed significant challenges on the cast. Much rehearsal is needed to ensure singers are synchronised with the music, both in rhythm, pitch and musical entrances at the beginning of each number. There were undoubtedly accomplished singers in the cast who were

not entirely able to show their talents to the best effect, using pre recorded music.

Despite these musical setbacks, the group performed with energy and enthusiasm. These qualities served them well so that they successfully brought out the humour of this musical.

**Enid Cooper
NODA Representative
District 2**