

## A somewhat vague remembrance of things past

### *Much Ado About Nothing*, August 8<sup>th</sup> afternoon show

I am sorry that this is a tardy and short review. I took no notes as the play was on, preferring instead just to revel in it and fully believing at that stage that I would be witnessing it again soon. In any case I was busy through the interval and had to dash off at the end to negotiate my way through Saturday shopping and football traffic and be back at *Macbeth* an hour before that started in the evening.

I was working on Sunday and work related events (including me running an out of season Burns' Night!) conspired to rob me of every evening the following week. By the time I could try to conjure up my review, I felt I could no longer do it justice; so I put it off, certain I would see it again but rain and non-Shakespeare commitments conspired against me, so what I offer below is 'a somewhat vague remembrance of things past'. Still, it is not such a bad thing that this is the play I cover least because, no matter how much I love and celebrate the CSF, no-one could be more enthusiastic than the review in the *Cambridge News* that I link to on the previous page.

So what do I recall? Well, given Marco Ghelardi's previous successes with *The Taming of the Shrew* last year and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the first half of this summer's bonanza, I arrived at the venue fully confident that this would be a rip-roaring success. I spoke to him just before the beginning of the charity, matinee performance and said that everyone loves Benedick and Beatrice so nothing could go wrong....and just as I was uttering the words I realised that if something goes wrong with the lead two then you would be truly stumped.

Thankfully Michael Patrick and Kate Cooper played everyone's favourite pair brilliantly, the eavesdropping scenes, as ever, played so very well in the College garden setting. Consequently, it was as good as I had originally envisioned. I saw Michael, the following day, helping out the ever wonderful David Rowan at a Shakespeare drama workshop at Churchill College. Before that event began, a man suddenly appeared in front of Michael, enthusiastically shaking his hand and telling him that he had seen the performance on Saturday night and that Michael had been "the spark that lit up the whole evening".

There were more than the stellar lead roles to thank for a happy afternoon, however. Lucy Glassbrook, Charles McGuire, Judy Tcherniak and Lawrence Ward all undertook their doubling roles with consummate professionalism and no little vigour. The last named, in particular, deserves special commendation for turning the oft minor – and usually unpleasant – character of Leonato into a real crowd pleaser. His facial expressions when Claudio, eventually realising the gigantic error of his ways, knelt and proffered Leonato his sword were something to behold. He was far from only a comic presence; he was a powerful one too. Belying the script, he looked like he could rip Claudio in half which, sorry Simon Pothecary, (who was a very believable Claudio), is very much what any audience wants to happen.

All in all, it was a fun-filled success; waves of laughter filled the summer air, I very much regret not getting back to it for a second view and for not realising I *had* to write a proper review ten days ago, whether I had to the time to do so or not.

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