

## **Much Ado About Nothing - Review by Sharon Drummond North West Theatre Arts Company (NWTAC)**

Another classic Shakespeare text abridged by NWTAC with a wonderful Bollywood/Bhangra theme. With some stunning Choreography by Katie Gough and great direction by Prab Singh this play was very watchable and told the story of the two love affairs brilliantly.

The set was simple with different levels of staging denoting different areas. There was no disruption to scene changes and screens on sliders were beautifully moved to change scenes. Sound and lighting complimented the action. The props kept to a minimum were super and the music arrangements were very complimentary to the story and scenes played out.

The costumes were absolutely stunning with such beautiful attention to detail and some lovely additions especially with some of the girl's jewellery. Again this production will appeal to young people (and their teachers!) who are currently studying Shakespeare as it makes the language more accessible and the story easy to follow.

Every one of the cast were fabulous including the new members to NWTAC and this Shakespeare production. By producing such diverse texts for production this allows these young people to experience all sorts of varied types of work and feel comfortable performing them. Not one player was out of place and they all seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The supporting cast all played great roles including the dancers who moved the screens and the watch who put in some nice comedy performances. The Friar played by Harry Gardner was fabulous with nice clear diction and some lovely sensitive touches. Gabrielle Adebajo as First Watchman was fantastic with not just a command of the language but a command of the stage. Well done you two.

Borachio and Conrade ably played by Szymon Tomczyk and Alfie Cook worked well together and delivered their parts with swagger and style.

Don John the sneaky brother of Don Pedro was really well played by Holly Norbury and Don Pedro was great played by Jonny Molyneux with much humour added to this role.

Messenger/Sexton was very well played by Lois Dibden and Phoebe Massey put in a super performance as Leonata with much light and shade in her performance.

Beatrice was played superbly by Emily Cavanah with a great ability to deliver the one-liners with a dry sarcastic style which fitted the character really well. Lois Ormerod was wonderful as Hero the polar opposite to her cousin Beatrice. This again was a lovely light and shade performance.

The two male leads of Benedick and Claudio played by Liam Watson and Solomon Asante-Owusu were absolutely brilliant. Liam as the narcissistic Benedick played this role beautifully including his monologue in the audience. His delivery with clear

diction and a degree of sarcastic humour was perfect for this role and his scenes with Emily as Beatrice were extremely funny and well choreographed. Solomon was amazing as Claudio who displays more sides to his character including anger and love for Hero. His command of the language was brilliant and he looked and sounded so natural delivering the Shakespearian text. Both Liam and Solomon have so much stage presence and were a joy to watch.

The whole cast really shone in their roles, again no weak links and a real sense of enjoyment for the Bard through the cast's delivery and enthusiasm. I loved the style with some gorgeous Bollywood dancing where again the whole cast looked stunning. Loving Shakespeare like I do it is wonderful to experience the differing styles created by this wonderful company who always deliver and create an exciting take on whatever show they do.