



Society : Cygnets Players  
Production : Let's do it  
Date : 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017  
Venue : St Barnabas Church  
Report by : Tony Sweeney

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## Show Report

### General

A tribute to the talent of Victoria Wood which was a montage of some of her greatest moments was a great idea and done well with much that was very familiar acted out in front of us. We saw recreations of Waitress (two soups), Kitty, Bus Stop, Kimberley, Turkish Bath, the trolley sketch, Acorn Antiques, all classics that have become cultural legends and rounded up with four couples giving us a fantastic rendition of the song from an audience with. A real feast and with some great Northern accents to boot.

By trying something different I felt the group did well broadening their repertoire and the audience really appreciate the effort.

### Players

Rosie Orchard as the announcer got the feel of the character just right. Aided by a wig that fooled no-one she glided through a series of skits all used in the Wood on TV series. She also showed her talent as a pianist and singer with "real life".

Sarah Prescott as soloist in Manchesterford opened the show with a bang. Later as the woman in Waitress (two soups) she gave us some really excellent facial expression that projected her exasperation at what was a ludicrous situation which has become one of Wood's stand out sketches.

Joe Beecroft is quite a versatile performer ranging from the arthritic waitress in a sketch that really stands out in Wood's portfolio, and also a the love struck but rather ditzy male in young love.

Jonny Clines as one of the business men in the trolley sketch and as Mr Clifford in Acorn Antiques showed his versatility as part of the finale we also heard his singing skills and dance making him an all round performer.

Sue Lockett (Old Bag) aided by a fantastic costume gave an excellent performance.

Laura Holden as the friend in Bus Stop again got the character right as a sort of thick foil to the lead role. This was an excellent and well observed piece of supportive acting.

Clive Martin man in two soups gave a solid performance that allowed the waitress to shine. As the customer the part is very much one that gives the sketch its context and his measured performance added to the overall impact.

Steph Parr as the female in young love was suitably ditzzy and a little simple which makes this sketch the well observed piece of social comment that it is.

Helen Burgess-Bartlett delivered the monologue for Kimberly complete with the iconic costume used by Wood in an audience with. A piece of work which she did well rising to the challenge. She also played the Waitress in the trolley sketch another of the truly iconic pieces of work from the Wood stable and again did it well.

Sarah Goddard as Madeleine again did well in a complex and vocally demanding role.

Carol Stewart gave an unforgettable performance as Mrs. Overall in three scenes based on Acorn Antiques. Ideal for the part in terms of stature she managed to transform herself from a young woman to an arthritic elderly one using excellent body language, vocal skills and a fantastic costume. Hers was the outstanding contribution of the afternoon.

Nicky Radford as a rather unusual aerobics instructor in "Fattitude" involving not only a monologue in the Wood style but also some light aerobics just to make it more difficult. However her performance was first rate funny and witty throughout.

Phillip Ruby as an Italian waiter in Spaghetti was suitably smarmy and projected the role well. In a number of other small roles he also did well and rounded it off as part of the group who performed the finale.

Alison Walters gave us a fantastic performance as Kitty very much the forerunner of Hyacinth Bouquet in keeping up appearances.

Lizzie Kempson played Miss Babs in Acorn Antiques, in a fantastic wig and costume, gave an excellent supporting performance in the iconic spoof soap.

Gilly Low clearly enjoyed her role in Reincarnation throwing herself into it to good effect.

Josie Teale as the lead Kelly in Bus stop gave a really good reconstruction of the sketch and clearly really understood the irony that is so much a part of the Wood style.

Katie Winter Film classic did well in what is not always a one of the best remembered sketches.

Katy Thompson as the overbearing director in "Giving notes" was wonderfully over the top delivering a situation that is well known to all of us with real punch. Aided by a costume that really added to the performance this was a very funny and entertaining sketch.

## Director

Ian Doswell is obviously a fan of the great lady and the show was testimony to that. His use of a limited stage space was good and the casting imaginative whilst still retaining the charm of the original.

## Musical Director

James Hall aided by Janette Williams on drums kept the musical pace strong throughout. A sound well balanced for the acoustic of a church which was clear and supported the singers well. He contributed in song too with both Politically Correctness and the start of "lets do it" adding to the feel of a real celebration I thought.

## Choreographers

Vicki Rice and Deborah Lowe devised some routines that worked well with the talent available adding to the visual spectacle well.

## Stage Management

With so many scenes and quite a large cast much of the stage management needed to be done by the cast as they went and this was done very smoothly

## Sound

It was a good clear sound both from the players and the musicians throughout.

## Lighting

The lighting was sufficient for the demands on stage.

## Make-up

The make up again reflected the VW influence with some quite over the top examples but it all added to the feel of the show.

## Set Design

A simple but functional set proved a useful backdrop to some 33 little snippets of Woods work. Having the piano at the centre of the set also paid homage to her as a pianist. I thought this worked well.

## Props

The majority of props were items of furniture used to differentiate between scenes and so in keeping with a fast moving multi-scene review style.

### Costumes

The costumes also reflected the Wood style of somewhat less than chic wear and again added to the feel of the show. In the “young love2 sketches the lovers worn football scarves of different teams which would not be the case in life Joe Beecroft wearing a Fulham scarf which would defiantly not be the case.

### Programme

A well designed programme though it would have been nice to list the players in each sketch to help the audience identify who was who. Whilst the photos in the bios helped sometimes its difficult to identify individuals and give them the recognition they deserved.

### Front of house

The front of house including the catering element worked hard to make you feel welcome which is ideal and generally managed the audience well.

Tony Sweeney  
Regional Representative  
NODA London