

A review of 'Brassed Off' presented by Viva in Soham on Thursday 9th November 2017.

What an excellent production it was! 'Brassed Off' directed by Keith Gallois and Judith Collingswood and produced by Keith and Alison O'Connor, was a magnificent show. All the characters rang true and through their fine acting we were transported into the lives of the mining families in times of trouble, sharing with them the agony of poverty and the humour needed for survival. With the superb performances by Soham Comrades Brass Band, we were treated not only to an admirable presentation of what many of us remember from the film, but the music was a splendid treat too.

David Tickner played Danny to the tee. He was indeed a band conducting fanatic. His grandson Shane (played by Alfie Peckham) was an ideal young boy acting the part with natural flair.

The main miners and band members, Jim (Steve Perry), Harry (Geoff Fisher), Phil (Darren Smith) and Andy (Will Cahill) were wonderfully 'laddish' and some of the best scenes that were probably some of the most difficult to present successfully, were those when the band slowly disintegrated into a cacophonous mess after the members had had a few too many drinks at each village on their tour.

The wives, Vera (Sue Perry), Rita (Mandy Morrish) and Sandra (Sophie Plachcinski) were all credible partners whose passion was evident right from the start. Gloria (Amy Noonan) was a superb representative of the powerful managers who had obviously decided to close the mine, in spite of her glowing report of how successful it could have been. Her naivety came through very well and added spice to her relationship with her old flame Andy. He was indeed a young lad with an eye for the girls and incapable of arriving to band practice on time.

A mention must go to the actor Andy Gillett who gave an unnervingly realistic portrayal of the bailiff. Other vital contributors were Bridget Hickish, Gemma Politt, Dave McCalpin, Clare Gillet, Justine Whitworth, Helen Meads, Benjamin Surrige, Ruby Fordham, Sarah Boor, and Ellie Gillett.

Congratulations to everyone who took part and provided the support that is always much needed and which was very much in evidence in this excellent production. .

This was indeed a most satisfying night's entertainment. As one member of the audience was heard to say, 'Who needs the West End when we have productions like this here?'