

The Vicar of Dibley

VIVA

Thursday 17th May 2018

Director: Mary Barnes

We were welcomed at the doors to “St Barnabus Church”, AKA St Andrews Church, by the Reverend Pottle and his Verger Alice Tinker. This was a lovely touch and much appreciated by the congregation.

“The Vicar of Dibley” as with any of the much loved television sitcoms that have transferred to the stage, is won or lost in the casting and the actors ability to capture the essence of the characters, and on this score I am pleased to say that VIVA achieved this in spades. The whole ensemble, although not clones of the original cast, brought the tv episodes to life. I particularly enjoyed Dave McCalpin’s opening performance as the Reverend Pottle, and a special mention goes to Hannah Schunmann, who obviously did her homework on the character of Alice Tinker, originally played by the late Emma Chambers. Alice’s mannerisms and quirks were captured perfectly.

The show was staged in the Church of St Andrews, a perfect backdrop, although not without it’s difficulties. Phil Midgley’s excellent set design had to be literally cut around the two pillars at the foot of the chapel. The village hall, the vicarage and the vestry, were all represented in a very small space, but did not suffer because of this. Well done to Stage Manager Alison O’Connor for the swift scene changes. The film of the “Songs of Praise” episode was brilliant and certainly well received by the audience who were mostly starring in it. I also enjoyed the song choices that covered the transitions in the scene changes.

Mary Barnes direction was spot on and not limited by the lack of performance space.

This was another great show by VIVA, as we have come to expect, and it had the audience rolling in the aisles. My congratulations to all concerned for a wonderful production.

Don McKay

Councillor NODA East