

## **HERSTMONCEUX AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY**

### **MADE IN DAGENHAM – THE MUSICAL - 9<sup>TH</sup>**

**November 2019**

HATS may well have the word amateur in their name but this was in no way an amateur production. The true story of those brave women at Ford Dagenham who struck for equal pay for the skilled work they carried out was told with vigour and compassion and brought modern history to life. All women should be proud of what they did and although women's rights haven't yet come to fruition in all areas, what better way to tell this fascinating story than with music and drama so professionally carried out.

The protagonist (dictionary definition "an advocate or champion of a cause or idea") was Rita who was played by Lucy Smith. Rita was a wife and mother who adored her family but who was persuaded to stand up for her fellow workers. Lucy gave the character all the compassion and passion for her cause that was needed. Her speech to the TUC at the end of the piece made me want to get up and cheer! Dave Nicholles was very well cast as Eddie, Rita's husband.

He played the role with expertise, at once trying to support Rita but unable to understand her continued absences when he was trying to cope with family life. Their children, Sharon and Graham, were played by Darcey Hagues and Henry Stevens, making up the family in great style. Connie (Linda Thompson) and Monty (Trevor Fuggle) both gave great performances as the Union Reps using all their skills to portray these characters so well.

All the machinists added so much to the story with Beryl (played by Nicola Cullen) the loud mouth whose every other word was a swear word (in my working career I used to take the minutes for Management/Trade Union meetings so know that this sort of language could be the vernacular in some cases!) and Joanna Stevens as Clare who never really knew which word to use for what she was describing!

Great acting from Stan Fillery as Harold Wilson and Alison King as Barbara Castle and from Michael Fillery as Ron Macer, the US Ford boss.

The male Ford workers gave their all as did all those playing the important supporting roles, including the ensemble and the singing and movement from all was just right to listen to and visually.

Great work as always from the backstage team in all the many



aspects of their work (scenery minimal and absolutely ideal) and the programme was colourful and made a really interesting read. The look of all on stage was definitely 60's – I remember, I was there!

Many congratulations to all involved and especially to Directors, Chris & Linda Thompson, Musical Director Michelle Radley (whose band, those seen and those hidden, gave great support to the whole piece), and to Linda Thompson for Choreography.

Brenda Gower Regional NODA Representative