

# We have ways to make you laugh

IF laughter is the best medicine, then Chideock Players are superlative physicians.

Their production of 'Allo 'Allo at the village hall last week was nothing short of an hilarious triumph for all concerned.

The audience rumbled with mirth from the start, pausing only to wipe tears from their eyes before the next belly-laugh had them doubled up yet again.

Debut directors Hilary Baker and Natalie Williams can be congratulated for not only choosing an impeccable cast but for hours of work on the technical side.

With Café René as the background, other scenes were played on the apron, a well-rehearsed backstage crew making the transitions with the minimum of fuss under the guidance of Sarah Burge.

But what went on out front was what everyone went to see and they were rewarded in spades.

How difficult to recreate the familiar characters from the TV series –

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## Review: ROSEMARY LEWIS

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and how easy the players made it look.

Accents never faltered and characterisation was immaculate, helped by authentic costumes military, civilian and downright sexy.

Forget trying to keep up with the plot, its complications involving a dead cockatoo, phallic sausages, that portrait of the Fallen Madonna, a blow-up doll and more Fuhrers than even Hitler himself could have wished for.

It was beautifully organised chaos, with Nick Baker leading the way as randy René, smooching with his willing waitresses Yvette (Catherine Batten) and Mimi (Taz Moores) while avoiding the attentions of his formidable wife, Edith (Maggie Imber).

Heading La Resistance was Marilyn Harrison as Michelle, alongside John Challis as Crabtree, the undercover English policeman, and Peter Moores as Leclerc.

On the opposing side were Jim Pettifer as von Strohm, newcomer Leigh Conley as Flick of the Gestapo, Tracey Lunt as Helga, Keith Readings as Gruber, Chris Lambert as von Schmelling and Harry Harrison as Captain Bertorelli the Italian.

Ross Jones and Dewi Lambert popped up and down as the British airmen, along with Tony Brown, Francis Brown and Guy Mills in various guises and Ken Armitage as the café pianist.

And no-one put a foot wrong throughout.

Highlights included Mme Edith's cabaret, Helga's striptease, an inspirational cinema scene, Crabtree's *franglais* accent and many excellent bits of stage business.

So listen *vairry* carefully, I shall say *zis* only once – 'Allo 'Allo can be seen again tonight (Friday) and tomorrow at Bridport Arts Centre, with performances at 7.30pm.

It's no "good moaning" if you miss it.



□ **WHERE'S THE SAUSAGE?** René (Nick Baker) and Lt Gruber (Keith Readings) in a telling scene from 'Allo 'Allo.  
Picture: JOHN GURD/B0464c