

ROMANTIC COMEDY IDEAL FOR SPRING

Smiling play-goers returned to their homes from Downham Village Hall after having enjoyed watching 'Your Obedient Servant', presented by Stage Two Downham last week.

Mel Scorch ably produced this romantic comedy in three acts, which was written some years ago by Diana Morgan, at a time when women were beginning the struggle to find their own independence and identities in the marital, social and business worlds - though still mostly dependent on the menfolk.

This was a play by a woman about women and thoroughly appreciated by the ladies in the audience. The leading character was Laura Pemberton, a widow with two teenage daughters, who found keeping house extremely difficult because of working at her antique business.

Her Camden Hill flat was revealed as the curtain rose and the audience applauded David Scott's set bestrewn with dirty cups and papers etc. Bright green tights hanging from the bracket lamp on the staircase gave an amusing touch to the décor.

Lesley Knight, a well-known Stage Two member, took the part of Laura and immediately established her anxiety and dismay at having to admit to her mother-in-law that her home and her daughters were not looked after as well as she wished.

Laura found difficulty in hiring domestic servants and had only one more agency to phone. This last phone call set the plot of the play in motion, as her request for a domestic servant was answered within minutes by - to the great delight of the audience - a man!

Charles Selby, play with great pleasure by Bob Cleeve, arrived at the door hot-foot from the agency, seeking employment. There he stood, the romantic lead, glowing with that extra fatal attraction of discreet suave maturity! Oooh! Lovely! What next?

The significance of the play's title revealed itself as Charles transformed the flat into a veritable cosy nest for Laura and her two attractive chicks Mother-in-law Pemberton, amusingly played by Dorothy Cushing, was not too sure about this new arrangement.

Julia, the dram-loving schoolgirl in uniform, who could quote Shakespeare extensively, was played by Kirsty McKinlay with a delightfully 'devious' naivety. In very striking contrast, Rachel Scholes took the elder role of Caroline, a student of fashion and design. This young lady commanded all attention as she swept into the flat clad in brilliant eye-catching gear and a dramatic black velvet hat over her long, blonde hair. Wow!

Bob Cleeve really developed his characterisation as he steadily worked his way into the hearts of the three generations of Pemberton women. Even mother-in-law realised how invaluable he was as a helpmate to Laura, so she advised her to marry her old friend Edward Llewellyn.

Gerald Hood played this subsidiary character with admirable restraint. Llewellyn had resisted the temptations of wedlock until well into his mature years.

But the delight of the audience when Laura 'got her man' - Charles, who turned out to be a 'resting' actor - proved that the producer's choice of a romance with a happy ending was just right for Stage Two's spring production.

The question left to everyone's imagination was whether Charles would