

Review Bonbon's Big Nite

CABARET Life is a cabaret – and if anybody's going to supply us with the route map that allows us to live it to the full, it's Ralph Le Bonbon. A cross between vintage Corrie star Alec Gilroy and the legendary Frankie Howerd, the distinguished host(ess) with the mostest guided chuckle-chasers at the Widcombe Social Club through a programme that incorporated live music, overblown am-dram and searingly sharp comedy, making for a rip-roaring evening of non-stop entertainment. James Lambeth's 45th Street Swing got the party going in fine, croon-a-long style before the Widcombe Players treated us to a quick comedy of errors vignette – stylishly dreadful acting and a ridiculously unlikely plot resulting in some hilarious 'extreme hamdram' indeed. Next up, Bill Smarme and His Mate Dave gave us the Red Hot Lovers: the unctuous karaoke king of your

worst nightmares, with a 1980s-style synth god on keyboards who quickly had us wetting ourselves (though probably not in the way that Bill Smarme intended). As the evening raced along, comedians Seymour Mace and Greg Davies provided the quickfire stand-up elements, with Pip Utton's Roy Orbison Tribute providing shimmering moments of ethereal beauty in between. Mace's brutally funny observational material pulled harder-hitting punches than Davies's darker meanderings managed to do, but on a Bonbon evening, all the acts are winners. Want a reason to be cheerful when the sun does its annual disappearing act? Bonbon's Big Nite returns in the autumn. (Melissa Blease) ★★★★★

BONBON'S BIG NITE WIDCOMBE SOCIAL CLUB, BATH, THUR 7 JUNE.

