

NODA Review for Bedroom Farce April2016

I was delighted to see a near-full house at the Chrysalis Theatre for Tread The Boards' 30th Anniversary production, Bedroom Farce – which was the first play they performed back in 1986. Only two days previously I had seen another society's production of The Hollow (by Agatha Christie) which commemorated the passing of a member who had been in the play 50 years before.

New plays, new people and new societies are essential in the development of amateur theatre but it's also part of our strength to have such continuity too.

This was a very enjoyable show – I have rarely heard so much loud and prolonged laughter at an amateur production.

The play takes place in three bedrooms – a challenge which was well-met by the set builders – something only someone like Alan Ayckbourn would take on. In one, a middle-aged couple, Ernest and Delia fret over their son Trevor and his marital problems. In another, Kate and Malcolm are setting up house for the first time and in the third we find Nick and Jan. Managing to visit each bedroom – and spoiling a good night's rest for everyone - are Trevor and his over-anxious wife, Susannah.

Overall acting quality was good, lines learnt and diction clear.

I felt that Glenn Bamford (Ernest) and Andrew Chapman (Malcolm) gave competent but rather reserved performances. I enjoyed seeing Ben Johnson as Trevor, whose manner gave us some hints as to why he and Susannah were not getting on as well as they should. Faisal Mohiuddin gave a lovely performance as Nick, who spends all of the play in bed with a bad back, making all and sundry know how very poorly he is – and squeezing all the laughs he could from his sorry predicament. Alex Tsang showed her experience in her very confident portrayal of Delia.

I was very impressed by the performances of the 'new girls' to the company, Michelle Milne, suitably neurotic as Susannah, Lizzie Bailes as reliable and sparky Jan, but particularly Katie McLeary as Kate – totally comfortable in command of her role with a lovely sense of comic timing.

Set in the seventies a very good effort was made to give the piece a feel of the period through appropriate furniture and props, though - perhaps a small point but one for other groups to consider - one character had some very 21st century tattoos on clear display.

That criticism aside, Mike Ames and his company are to be congratulated for putting on such a good show.