



Society : Quince Players
Production : **KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE**
Date : Thursday 17th May 2012
Venue : Cordes Hall, Sunninghill
Report by : Gordon Bird, NODA Representative, Area 14

Report

I was pleased to be invited by Quince Players to see John Chapman's 1992 play "*Kindly Leave The Stage*" on Thursday 17th May, the first night of the second week's run.

I have to say I did not like the play – once the initial plot unravels and we discover the play within the play and the "real" off stage relationship issues come to replace the "on stage" problems, nothing really happens and no conclusion is offered by the author. Their relationship predicaments were raised and never resolved, leaving me somewhat unsatisfied.

Nonetheless, I did enjoy the performance by a talented and well disciplined cast and crew who worked exceptionally hard to deliver every ounce of comedy from the script. The pace was superbly controlled and the cue bite exceptionally maintained. This is a very well rehearsed cast, crisply directed and performing at a very high level without any obvious "weak link". There was genuine "spark" between the actors on stage, giving some reality and immediacy to their scenes. This can only be achieved by good team work and clear direction. Well done.

JULIE VOICE (Sarah)

There were some lovely exchanges between Julie and Stephen in the opening moments of the play. There was real spark between this couple and that energy was maintained throughout the show. The relationships (both relationships!) with Rupert were very believable. I liked the idea of changing your character by adding an accent when the "play" had stopped and we saw the "real" Sarah. However, I felt that the accent was not maintained throughout. Which is no surprise considering the pace of this show! Well done on an impressive performance.

STEPHEN GRIST (Rupert)

Stephen has a nice pace about his lines. Not rushed so that we cannot understand, and not laboured. Considering the size of this part, Stephen has to be congratulated in keeping a good pace of delivery throughout. At no time, unless intended (!), was there any hesitation. The volume was also very well delivered as I heard every word from my position in the auditorium. The character was maintained throughout the show.

MELANIE TRAPNELL (Madge)

Melanie displayed a nice contrast between her two characters of Madge. She had some excellent facial expressions that said spoke volumes! Sometimes actors concentrate so much on speaking they forget to act, or react. Melanie has a lovely gift of communicating with her face. Well done.

ROBIN NEWELL (Charles)

Robin has a lovely delivery and volume to his lines. One could imagine that "Charles" had many parts on radio, such was his clarity and richness of voice. There were some lovely comic moments when delivering his lines from inside the trunk. Not having any visual cue to aid him, I though Robin did very

well indeed in delivering these lines perfectly and to excellent comic effect. There was a nice change of pace by Robin when Rupert starts to perform his “acting”, or should we say over acting in Act 2.

ANNE KEEN (Mrs Cullen)

This was a wonderful character and very well portrayed by Anne. She delivered her comic lines with excellent effect. Her first entrance was superbly timed, giving a very good comic effect. This part was superbly played by Anne and she looked every bit of an experienced actress who has seen and done it all. Anne has a lovely stage presence and good understanding of her lines that added to an excellent performance.

STEPHEN MORTLOCK (Edward)

A lovely character as the drunken old timer! Stephen had good delivery and volume of his lines. There was some lovely moments from this actor – like his reaction to the glass of whisky (which he was expecting to be a prop but was real) and again a lovely reaction when he is told that “Charles” is in the trunk. It is not always easy to perform drunk on stage, but Stephen managed this very well. I hope that he did not have to “rehearse” too much on this for his motivation!

TOBY ADAMSON (Nurse Brown)

This is a nice cameo role, as the first aider watching his star performing from the auditorium. Toby performed this part well – showing some elements of being a “nerd” without going “over the top” which could have been so easy to do. There was good control of his line delivery, getting some good laughs as a result.

GEMMA SWAISLAND (Angela)

Gemma looked a natural on stage. I heard every word she said, and although it is easy to say, she looked and acted like a stage manager. Taking on the role as actual stage manager of this production clearly helped Gemma, but that does not necessarily follow that the audience appreciate the character that is being presented. One still has to act – and this you clearly did! Hopefully now that you have performed on stage for the first time since you were 7, it won't be so long that we see you on stage again.

Director (KEN LONG)

Assistant Director (JENNY BROWN)

Ken and Jenny can be congratulated on a very sharp production. The cue bite was excellent. The movement around the stage was very well rehearsed. The moments where the cast within the show tried to put themselves back on track was very well constructed and executed. Additional moments of comedy were added from the lines coming from the trunk – with the lid being lifted up, a line being fired out across the stage, before hiding back again. On each delivery, the audience and I laughed! The timing was spot on. This production started with the song “Don't leave me this way” – a perfect link the action that we were about to witness.

Stage Manager (GEMMA SWAISLAND)

Deputy Stage Manager (BECCY WIRE)

This was an unusual stage manager role as Gemma also had to appear as an actress on stage – the part being stage manager. This added to the realism of the play within the play and worked very well indeed. The set changes and the tab cues were timely. Congratulations to both Gemma and Beccy as

this may seem an easy show, but with so much confusion going on they needed to be on the ball, which they clearly were.

Stage Crew & Properties (ANNE ROBINSON & GORDON COE)

I noted that the wine glasses on stage, which were half filled, were never used. How I wished to have a sip, as they sat there tantalising, teasingly all evening. The coffee perculator arrived but with hardly enough to fulfil the three recipients. I first thought this was an error but I now come to the conclusion that this was part of the play within the play and therefore did seem appropriate. In this regard then, the properties were all perfectly applicable to the show.

Set

The set looked sturdy in construction and was very well dressed. The brown walls, curtains contrasting with the black dining chairs looked appropriate to the couple's social standing.

Lighting (PETER FITZWATER)

The show was very well lit without any noticeable shadows cast. The lighting appeared even throughout the stage and matched the interior of a dining room in the evening.

Costumes (DIANE GOSDEN)

Assisted by (HEATHER KING)

The costumes looked fitting to the play. The seasoned actor complete with cravat! The nurse's uniform matched the character perfectly. The part of Madge also looked the part with her blue dress.

Programme

A sixteen A5 page coloured programme, with five pages of adverts, costing a respectable £1.50. I liked the design of red banners on each page offering the headings in white bold font to be easily seen and read. The cast coloured head photographs were of a very good size and quality. The photographs accompanied some interesting cast biographies. A director's piece and a good synopsis completed this very high quality programme.

Front of House

Once again I was warmly welcomed by front of house team, accompanied by the director and assistant director.

Thank you for my invitation to see this production of *Kindly Leave the Stage* and look forward to their next production.

Gordon Bird
NODA representative
London Region, District 14