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Review



DON PARTIES ON

Holden Street Theatre November 2016

Gabrielle Scherrer

The Red Phoenix Theatre, recently founded by Michael Eustice & Libby Drake, launched their 2nd production this year, "Don Parties On" by David Williamson. This 2010 sequel to the 1970's play "Don's Party" sees the same characters 40 years later! They haven't changed much! Maybe they are a bit mellower and look back with a slight touch of self-awareness, but the brashness of the men and the self-righteousness of the women is still there!

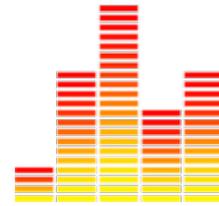
A son with marriage problems and his daughter with generational misconceptions add a dimension, but it is a play for 40 year olds upwards! Having experienced that era, even if they don't like it, they can see the humour. I think many younger people would be irritated and even shocked by the attitudes and beliefs of the characters! As Belle puts it "They don't tell us things like that in our Self Improvement classes!"

It was very well acted, in fact it didn't seem acted! Don, played by Wayne Anthony had the right mixture of regret and reticence. Julie Quick as Kath epitomised the tolerant but slightly resentful wife. The character of Mal seemed to be created for – or by – Adrian Barnes! His serene, self-possessed wife, Helen, played by Victoria Morgan, was the calm centre of the stage, a foil to the self-centered posturings of the men! Cooley, the eternal would-be bachelor type was wittily played by Brian Godfrey and Lyn Wilson who played his ex-wife, Jenny, brought the serious element very convincingly. Brant Eustice as son Richard was in the well-known triangle and his confusion was apparent! Jessica Carroll successfully played the "husband snatcher" as a flighty, over-emotional, young woman, accepted by no one except the infatuated Richard! Belle was a great picture of modern youth – full of theories and lost when confronted with reality! What a romp it was! But the hints of deeper issues gave the play some depth and one had the feeling at the conclusion that maybe the men had learnt something!!

Well done directors Michael Eustice & Libby Drake for an imaginative set and a production that progressed seamlessly. Everything ran smoothly thanks to the back stage team, Richard Parkhill, Heather Jones & Joshua Mensch. So if you missed this successful production of the Red Phoenix Theatre look out for their 2017 program starting on May 17th with "Two Brothers" by Hannie Rayson.

LIVE STREAM

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