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**Photo: Richard Parkhill**

## Theatre Review: Don Parties On

BY TRACEY KORSTEN ON NOVEMBER 14, 2016 ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, PERFORMING ARTS REVIEWS, WHAT'S ON

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Presented by **Red Phoenix Theatre**  
Reviewed 10 November 2016

David Williamson's **Don's Party**, is undoubtedly one of the stalwarts of the contemporary, Australian theatre canon. And with good reason: it is a finely crafted play.




Photo: Richard Parkhill

The action takes place around the 2010 election, and the same structure as the original is in place: real recordings of ABC coverage, interspersed with political commentary and personal conflict from the characters. The former is simplistic and clichéd and the latter is forced.

However, as a night at the theatre it is not without its charms. It has a warmth, and some humour, which the audience clearly appreciated. Wayne Anthoney as Don is, as always, a strong stage presence, although he seemed to be struggling with lines on opening night. Julie Quick as Kath is also strong, but needs to settle into a less theatrical, more naturalistic, delivery. Brian Godfrey does an excellent job as Cooley, as does Victoria Morgan as Helen. Sadly, Williamson is still under-writing the female characters, and Helen is almost just there for decoration.

Brant Eustice as Richard, holds his own, as does Lyn Wilson as Jenny. Younger actors Kate van der Horst as Belle and Jessica Carrol as Roberta both put in credible performances, although Carrol needs to portray histrionics in some way other than just shouting all the time. Some vocal colour would add greatly to her work. Stand-out performance for the night was Adrian Barnes as Mal, who managed to eke some depth out of fairly thin material.




Photo: Richard Parkhill

Michael Eustice directed his cast with a deft touch, allowing them some space in which to play and stretch.

I have no doubt this will be a popular play and garner appreciative audiences, if for no other reason than that Williamson has become a (albeit questionable) trusted brand in theatre. I applaud Red Phoenix for their commitment to Adelaide premieres, and I certainly think this is a commercially clever choice.

Expect a pleasant, non-confronting night in the theatre. Just don't expect to come out quoting any lines.

Reviewed by **Tracey Korsten**  
Twitter: @TraceyKorsten

**Venue:** Holden Street Theatres  
**Duration:** 2 hours  
**Season:** 10th-19th November 7.30 pm with 2pm performance on 13th November


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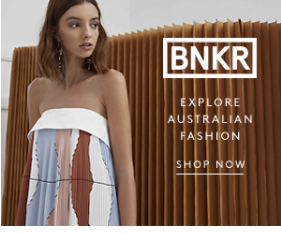
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