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## THEATRE – Don Parties On – Red Phoenix – HST – 4K

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By **Peter Maddern**

Just beyond 40 years on and Don is holding another of his famous election night parties. Whereas in 1969 his friends all embraced the freedoms and hopes that Gough Whitlam promised and seemed likely to deliver after that evening, now all political colours are embraced as Julia Gillard faces her election that ended in a hung parliament.

What had happened in the intervening years is then examined by David Williamson in often an unfettered manner, with subsequent generations thrown into the mix. It is fair to say a less than flattering picture is painted of them all; whether that also pertains to the outcomes for our country is for audience members to decide.

Don (Wayne Anthony) took to writing about them all in a book. His wife Kath (Julie Quick) has never forgotten the week Don spent with another woman notwithstanding the enthusiasm she herself showed in earlier times for some wife swapping sex with the now emphysemic Cooley (Brian Godfrey) and Mal (Adrian Barnes) and Helen (Victoria Morgan) have enjoyed great highs and lows in their personal lives and careers.

Once the fate of their children starts to become apparent – notably Don and Kath's 42 year old Richard (Brant Eustice) and his daughter Belle (Kate van der Horst) – it is obvious the elder generation's self-occupations have created problems of their own; a cause and effect they all seem blissfully unaware of.

Under Michael Eustice's steady direction, all the cast have a great time with their characters with Brant Eustice and perhaps the standout performer. What may become complex story lines are kept well separated with the use of actual ABC election night coverage interspersing to keep character personas reinforced in the minds of the audience.

It's all great fun but mostly for those of Don's generation; younger patrons might feel the whole thing all these people are completely foreign to them but Williamson's biting humour aided by Eustice's deft handling of the brewing farce keeps the whole rollicking along and richly enjoyable for all.

**Kryztoff Rating 4K**

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