

A REVIEW OF THE BEAUFORT PLAYERS
NOVEMBER 2005 PRODUCTION OF
ROLEPLAY
by Alan Ayckbourn

Elaine O'Sullivan should be congratulated for a most enjoyable production, her first full-length play as director. The audience loved it. Ted Adcock, Eshani Weeresinghe, Jeremy Spurgeon and the rest of the backstage crew got the very first round of applause for their set. It realised perfectly the sort of expensively minimalist apartment to which a successful software designer would aspire!

The casting throughout was excellent. Thomas Cobb as Justin and Jo Hayes as Julie-Ann made an attractive couple who swiftly exposed the cracks in the relationship through good characterisation - he showing every sign of insecurity, she obsessional to the point of hysteria, maintaining her character throughout. Thomas' somewhat awkward movement was ideal for this character. I should like to see how he fares in a completely different role. Paige is a difficult act to pull off, because she has to be vulnerable but a survivor, tarty but glamorous, vulgar but bright, aggressive but also sensitive to others. Natasha Bergg managed it exactly.

Chris Burns must have been studying punch drunk ex-boxers because he looked the part and had just the right amount of tics. He gave the sense of a man who could be scary but basically soft-hearted. You had to believe that wonderful Kitty Martin's elegantly tipsy Arabella would go off with him, and you did.

And then there were Martin Roe and Lynne Fitzgerald as Derek and Dee, Julie-Ann's dreadful parents from Doncaster. What a double act - perfect comic timing and reactions. I shall treasure the memory of Lynne's laugh and Martin's sad comments on deviant goings-on. The Beauforts should go from strength to strength. They now have not only experienced members but so many young members who bring looks, talent and energy. They will gain in confidence, speed up their delivery still further and develop that skill the veterans have, to get themselves and each other out of difficulties onstage!

An evening watching theatre is made all the more enjoyable by all the work that goes on off-stage and in the auditorium to set the scene and create an ambience. Congratulations to all those who were involved in this (and incidentally I thought Krystyna Kobiak's programme was very fine).

Jay Cayley