



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Society : Beaufort Players  
Production : "Boxing Clever"  
Date : 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
Venue : The Ascension Church Hall, Ealing  
Report by : Bill Baynes, Regional Rep, Region 9, NODA, London

Show Report

## ***NODA – Be inspired by Amateur Theatre***

It was a great pleasure to attend Beaufort Players' production of "Boxing Clever" on behalf of Zena Wigram

This play was written and directed by the multi-talented **THOMAS COBB**. Apparently his inspiration for the play was gleaned from his experiences of moving house. Specifically these were the packing up of his home into cardboard boxes and his dealings with a local storage company. It must have been a harrowing time for him and Lainy but the end result was an entertaining evening for all of us.

### **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Although there are some obvious advantages it is not always a good idea for the writer of a play to be the sole director. One of the reasons for this is that the writer knows the story so well that they do not always appreciate when the audience has a problem following the plot. I believe that this was slightly evident, here, during the frantic movement back and forth of the boxes between the storage units (specifically – why did Charlie think the girls were pinching his boxes?). It could have been better explained. Perhaps the boxes should have been identically personalised e.g. coloured tapes or identical initials etc. As they were just plain cardboard boxes with no distinguishing features it was strange that Charlie assumed they were his. Otherwise I believe the director, **THOMAS COBB**, did a good job ensuring that the cast performed as he envisaged the characters and I feel he can be proud of the result.

This fast moving farce had all the usual ingredients we have come to expect with this genre – a stage full of doors, a situation of mistaken identity and coincidence and at least one character in a state of undress. It is important in a farce to play the characters straight – the comedy is in the dialogue and situation. There were just a couple of occasions when misplaced pantomime tactics were used but otherwise it was very well played – just as a farce should be.

**JAYNE BOWMAN** was Producer for this production and ensured that all the various disciplines came together as a team. The demands for a farce are great and whilst there are lots of rewards when there is an audience laughing, it is hard work, physically, getting to that stage. A job well done here.

The staging was clever – using the facilities of the theatre well. **ANA BRETES, ALAN ROBINSON & THOMAS COBB** created the design for the set, which really worked very well. The exceptional ease of working padlocks – which must have been a nightmare for crew and cast – was most impressive. Set changing required was mainly within the

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storage units and this was done efficiently and quietly under the management of **ALAN ROBINSON**.

The lighting plot was simple but effective and was controlled by **JANE QUILL & PETE BALLS**. The various sound effects required were efficiently delivered by **ROGER DISHLEY**. Particularly effective was the Audio book sequence.

**JAYNE BOWMAN & ALAN ROBINSON** had a mammoth task collecting and distributing all the props required for this play – Well done!

The programme cover and the Cleverbox logo were cleverly and effectively designed and the programme credits **MATT TYLIANAKIS, RUSSELL GILLMAN & KRISTYNA KOBIAK** for these.

## PERFORMANCES

The tone of the evening was nicely set by the first two characters to appear- the reception staff.

**MATT TYLIANAKIS** gave us a lovely performance as Scott, the idle store manager who was totally oblivious to the “goings on” on the first floor. He was a rather obtuse character who only saw what he wanted and took all instructions literally. He was totally blind to the fact that he was out-classed by his assistant Rachel. A very funny, well judged performance.

**GEMMA ROBINSON** played the efficient Rachel – who had aspirations of becoming an actress. Gemma was perfect for this role – quietly out-witting her rather naïve boss whilst allowing his ego to remain intact. Nicely done with good diction although maybe at times needed to watch projection for the audibly challenged amongst us!

**MARIA O’BEIRNE** was the Night Security Guard, Tracy, who had hidden depths - another good, solid characterisation with a nice twist at the end. Yet another employee who outsmarts the inadequate manager!

The main protagonist in this storage unit story was George - played here by **PETER FULLAGAR** – a homeless spurned husband sent ‘packing’ for his infidelity. Unable to afford to rent a room he arranges to hire a storage unit for his belongings but moves in with them – strictly against the company’s policy of course. Peter played the part with conviction and just the right degree of slapstick humour. His drunken scene was nicely done – well controlled (so easy to go over the top when playing the inebriate). The sequence with his audio book on ‘Divorce’ was excellently executed. A very good all-round performance.

**CHRIS BURNS** played “Cheeky chappie” Charlie, the villain of the piece. Charlie used his storage unit to house his stolen goods – labelling his priceless jewel collection as ‘Costume Jewellery’. Charlie is the classic East End “Diamond Geezer” but unfortunately he does not have a ‘heart of gold’. Chris gave us exactly what was required providing the “wide-boy villain” we expect in farce. A very physical part with all the hauling of the boxes and quick thinking as to which unit to hide in – good for the mind and body- keep telling yourself!! Well done.

**MINTU MIAH** played said henchman, Jack, although his early note-taking did make us a little suspicious of his actual agenda. As a villain he was very funny but perhaps even a little too comedic at times. He executed the choreography of the box movements efficiently and swiftly. He really came into his own though when he revealed his true identity and gave a very convincing performance of a police officer.

The other half of the estranged couple, coincidentally, is also using CleverBox storage facility. **LAINY COBB** gave a lovely performance as the frustrated wife Janice nicely lurching from anger and resentment to love and forgiveness. Ignorant of the fact that her helpful friend is the “other woman” Janice confides in her and initially gives her the “green light” more or less. The sexy lover Sarah was cheekily well played by **CHARLIE KENNEDY**. This character goes through several phases – initially helpful friend, then disloyal husband snatcher and finally abandoned paramour. Charlie managed to portray each of these stages convincingly.

Both Carole and I thoroughly enjoyed our evening with your friendly team. We were well looked after by your secretary **ELAINE O’SULLIVAN**. Thank you for making us so welcome and we hope to see you again sometime as normal audience members.

Bill Baynes NODA Rep (9)