



Society : Beaufort Players
Production : Prescription for Murder
Date : Church of the Ascension Hall, Ealing
Report by : Mike Smith

Show Report

Thank you for the opportunity to enjoy an evening of quality theatre. A greeting from Elaine and a chat with Thom made for a warm and friendly welcome.

A colourful frontispiece to the programme promised mystery and suspense. A full audience provided a buzz of anticipation in the hall, and we were not disappointed.

The set was beautifully designed and well-constructed, congratulations to Ana, Thom and Alan, it really does lift a production when working on a great set. The eye for detail in providing the appropriate props was excellent, just changing the time on the clock – well done.

Lighting was straightforward, and the subtle changes from morning, afternoon and evening were well executed. The choice of melodramatic scene change music added a nice eerie element to the show.

The plays action takes place in the living room of Dr and Mrs Forth. Mrs Forth is continually ill with various mysterious illnesses and it appears that Dr Forth may have a slightly shady, possibly suspicious past.

Credit must go to all the actors involved, as there were screeds of lines to be learnt. A couple of dropped lines – scarcely noticeable – were understandable, given the amount of setting-up and plot related information and misinformation that had to be conveyed to the audience.

Mary Hill – Dorothy Livingstone – struggled slightly at first with her accent. She quickly settled into her role, it was well played wholly believable and real and very entertaining.

Vicky Prior – Barbara Forth – seemed a little hesitant. Perhaps this was character portrayal or the fact she was playing a significant part for her first time. Whichever, she showed her capability of taking on a major role.

Perhaps the most endearing in this production were the Haighs. Played by Jane Quill and Peter Coles, Mary and Allan Haigh – a dominant wife and a hen-pecked husband. Both gave performances that were highly entertaining and subtle. One could almost believe they were a real married couple – authentic and recognisable. A tribute to Krystna Kobiak’s direction and to the acting skills of both Jane and Peter.

April Parker’s portrayal of the lovely, single and hot-for-doc Julia Moore was a delight. A haughty, classy, scheming femme fatale – nicely done.

Matthew Jay McCarthy – Dr Forth. This was a demanding role. Some dialogue was very fast in delivery. To be volatile, ambiguous and grumpy – not an easy task, but overall it was well managed. I'm sure Matthew will go from strength to strength in the group.

Brandon Jacobs Brewer – Eric Dawson, a computer salesman claiming to have a connection to Dr Forth's former fiancée. On first appearance seemed hesitant, his delivery of the script slightly monotone, so it would have benefitted from some variation. His delivery improved throughout the play and his identity at the end was well executed.

I felt the script suffered from too many cups of tea!!! Perhaps the author had been sponsored by a National tea company.

The interaction between characters was very good. The busy body Dorothy, the ailing Dr's wife Barbara, Mary a pillar of the community and her long-suffering husband Allan all relating well. The volatile Doctor, mood swinging between his wife and the ex-girlfriend. Julia, the ex, mostly cool and off-hand – but hot and calculating when with the Doctor. The unexpected visitor, Eric Dawson – the wild card, who at the end showed his true colours.

Set in the present day, the costumes well suited the production, as did hairstyles. Julia's very short dresses were no doubt eye-popping for those in the front row!

This was a well-directed and efficiently executed production, congratulations again to Krystyn and to Ana Bretes. Any production would not run smoothly without the support and help of the backstage crew, so well done to all.

I enjoyed the evening very much, and it's worth noting that the Friday audience were totally engaged throughout. Thank you Beaufort Players – I look forward to your future productions.

Mike Smith
Regional Representative
District 2