



Society : Beaufort Players
Production : Aiming High
Date : 16th March 2019
Venue : Beaufort Road Ealing
Report by : Mike Smith

Show Report

I looked forward to my second visit to Beaufort Players, having very much enjoyed my last. A warm welcome at the door with tickets and a programme, followed by a hug from Elaine, a greeting from Thomas and an introduction to Matthew gave us a great start to the evening.

Congratulations to **Lauren Jones** for her very eye-catching programme front cover, a very innovative design, advertising the fact that we were to be treated to two one act plays – certainly the way to whet the appetite.

The title “Aiming High” was well chosen, showcasing not only two original plays – written and directed by company members **Matthew Wiggins** and **Thomas Cobb** – but also giving some new members an opportunity to tread the boards.

Both Director/Playwrights produced very worthy scripts.

“The Voyage” provided us with an interesting insight of three very different candidates attending an interview for a very unusual opportunity.

“Fire and Forget” used the familiarity of the daytime quiz show to allow us to peek at the would-be contestants behind the scenes.

The plays between them produced a broad spectrum of characters, all of which were well suited to their role in each production. Each had good story lines and an unexpected twist at the end.

Let’s turn to the cast. Our first play – “The Voyage” with its four players. Written and Directed by Matthew Wiggins

Eileen Laird – What a brave lady! Taking on two roles. The Interviewer in “The Voyage” A character who – depending on the person being interviewed – tailored her attitude and approach. Not an easy ask, but well accomplished. A very wordy, well-rehearsed and well delivered performance, bringing a strong personality to life, yet still managing to show that everyone has a few weaknesses.

Emma Green – Her programme bi-og tell me she is a Nanny by day and a Potato Impressionist by night. I’m not sure what the latter is! Her portrayal of Sandy - a thoroughly spoilt, demanding brat - certainly created the right impression. When Daddy’s girl found herself being undermined by the Interviewer her body language spoke volumes. Her constant attention to her personal appearance was well managed without being distracting. I enjoyed taking a dislike to her condescending attitude, well done!

River Apparicio – Quentin!! A great name for a sci-fi obsessed office worker. This role was played with real feeling. I loved the roller coaster of the dialogue, which was well delivered. The overall demeanour, the appearance and the attitude were spot on.

It may not have been much of a stretch for this young man, but the role was certainly delivered extremely well. I hope to see more of him in future productions.

Danae Brandon – If this was your first play, it certainly will not be your last! A delightful portrayal of a forgetful, air-headed young Mother. One who can't seem to remember the age or the names of her own children! What chance has she of being the chosen candidate for such an opportunity of a lifetime. Her lack of self-belief was realistic, her body language mimicking her dialogue. Another member of a very well-chosen cast. Please keep on acting.

The second of the original plays written and Directed by Thomas Cobb – “Fire and Forget”.

Eileen Laird - Her second role of the evening, as Sam in “Fire and Forget” –was much less demanding than her first. As a backstage “runner” she brought a slightly sub-servient feel to her character, which I'm sure was not an easy task having just played a very strong role. A believable and equally well delivered performance. Well done.

Pia Klein – Such a delight to have a character with an authentic accent. I'm sure you were selected for the role for your acting ability and for no other reason. Harry Potter – Pottery?? We had no trouble in understanding you. Your enthusiasm for the part of Alex was evident and much enjoyed by the audience.

Perhaps when you next enter a game show quiz your chosen subject should be “London Parks”!

Megan Manning – What a devious character! You had us feeling sorry for you – until you changed your story!! Nicely played, a little softly spoken at times – but I guess that was part of drawing the gullible in. There certainly was not a repeat of Peter Pan, not a faltering line to be heard. Another believable character.

Kaiser Siddidui – A dream part – a loud, brash quiz show host. You certainly looked the part. It's one thing to deliver the spoken lines, but I think it is just as difficult to engage in the silent acting. Although you were not in the lit part of the stage it was still possible to see your actions throughout – well done.

I hope you enjoyed your first production, and that it will inspire you go onto bigger and better things.

Dermot Boyle – “Who loves ya Baby??” Well you certainly left the audience in no doubt! A well-crafted performance delivered with attitude and confidence. Nobody loved you – until the end, when you showed your softer side. I'm sure that Whitney Houston would have been proud to think her song had been the inspiration for Frances. A great addition to a well-cast play, congratulations.

I normally spend some time on other aspects of productions. This time I commend the Writers /Directors for their ingenuity in set design and construction. Plain and simple – and it worked a treat. My only observation – and it may have only been me – it took some time during “The Voyage” to realise that each person being interviewed was in a separate room. Perhaps some form of small screen/divider between each seat may have helped?

Stage blacks worked perfectly as a backdrop.

I’m all in favour of a low budget production (who would guess I’m Treasurer of my Society!) especially when it works as well as these two did.

Costumes and make-up – well done cast.

Lighting and Sound ably supplied by **Ana Bretes** and **Roger Dishley**, no production works well without their back-up team.

Elaine O’Sullivan – Your Announcing was beautifully done, and I’m pleased to say I think you were redundant in the role of Prompt.

Well done to all members of Beaufort who were involved with this production, I enjoyed the evening very much.

Thank you for your kind invitation.

Mike Smith – District 2 NODA Representative, London