



Society : Beaufort Players
Production : Clown Nation
Date : 24th July 2019
Venue : Church of the Ascension Hall
Report by : Mike Smith

[Show Report](#)

I always look forward to coming to see a Players production – there is always a warm welcome, and I know that the level of dedication shown by its members always pays dividends. What delights were in store? Another “in house” play written and directed by **Jane Quill**. I must say having read Janes page in the programme I was intrigued as to what the evening had in store. It certainly proved to be not only entertaining, but extremely thought provoking – just as Jane hoped. Highlighting so many aspects of the world in which we live and work. My congratulations to Jane, a well-constructed and well written piece, good casting and great Direction.

On what must have been one of the hottest nights of the year, I salute the members / cast of Beaufort Players on their production of “Clown Nation”. Dressed in T-shirts and shorts the audience were still slightly uncomfortable in the heat, but for the cast dressed in full clown costumes, wigs and heavy grease paint make-up it must have been unbearable!

Anna Bretes and **Thomas Cobb** had designed a plain and simple set providing us with an immediate image of an office environment, which was the customer service centre. Built by **Chris Burns** and his team of **Builders** the well-constructed set made clever use of entry and exit points and a kitchen area that gave depth to the small stage area.

The set was well lit throughout the production which enhanced the colourful wigs and costumes worn by the cast – well done **Peter Balls** and **Vicky Prior**.

The production was well managed throughout. Everything in the right place at the right time – such an important element in any show, teacups in the wrong cupboard can cause chaos!! Well done **Anna Bretes**, **Mary Hill** and **Eileen Laird**.

I wasn't aware of **Diana Dishley** being called upon to prompt during the evening, but I'm sure the cast were grateful for the safety net she provided.

The well managed sound, music, voice overs and for this production the interesting use of projection – were provided by **Roger Dishley**, **John White**, **Peter Coles**, **Jane Quill**, **Tomas Cobb** and **Matthew Wiggins**. What a team! Well-co-ordinated.

With the mention of teamwork, I must compliment **Louisa Mathieu**, **Jasmin Sehejpal** and **Katie Newell** on their superb presentation, a real masterclass in clown/stage make-up and the choice of wigs which complimented the whole “clown image” created by the splendid costumes from **Kyrstyna Kobiak**.

“**How did we end up here?**” – a question I'm sure the cast may have asked themselves during their rehearsal period. Did they really know what was in store when they auditioned and were then cast? I would, perhaps, normally review individual performances. In the case of this production I felt it was such a tight, well cast and totally supportive team effort, that an overall appraisal was more appropriate.

Each and every member of the cast contributed an enormous amount – both to the performance and to the delivery of some very deep and concerning aspects of our daily lives.

Clear diction, good stage presence, lovely timing – especially in the delivery of some very witty one liners. Seven cast members created characters that I'm sure we all could identify with. Which is no mean feat when playing serious but looking (and I say this kindly) slightly ridiculous.

I do have to say a “well done” to **Helen Power** for her double role as Coco and Frosty – it must have been a bit of a nightmare lightning change for her and the backstage team.

Having now mentioned Helen, I now feel obliged to role call the rest of the cast!!

Matt Wiggins – Bim Bam, **Brandon Jacobs Brewer** – Patches, **Elaine Cobb** – Bozo, **Emma Green** – Bungle, **Danae Brandon** - Squeaky and **Krystyna Kobiak** – Baggy.

This talented team between them gave us an in-depth translation of current day company/customer and private/workplace situations.

The office bullying, the pressure from management, the stress of personal relationships – all the things we can identify with.

With the day to day frustrations of the fictitious callers (could have been anyone of us) – do we now have more sympathy for customer service staff??

A roller coaster of emotions delivered throughout the evening, well-crafted and well delivered.

A small but very appreciative audience I'm sure will have gone away more aware of the modern world we live in, and perhaps we will all take a bit more personal responsibility.

A very timely opening night with a new Prime Minister being installed in Downing Street – I'm sure some comparisons will not have been lost on many of us.

A nod to the rest of the Beaufort Team who, as always, work hard to produce yet another very successful production.

I must say I shall never hear squeaky shoes again without being reminded of “Clown Nation”

Mike Smith – District 2 NODA Representative - London