

**Mike Walker
Chairman
Richmond Amateur Dramatic Society
6-8 Castle Hill
RICHMOND**

9 November 2014

Dear Mike,

The Birthday Party

Whenever I have written to RADS on previous occasions I have emphasised the sense of teamwork in your productions and have avoided the mention of individuals by name. On this occasion, however, although the production of 'The Birthday Party' was clearly a team effort, it would be entirely remiss of me to avoid mentioning the contribution of individuals.

Taking on one of Pinter's more challenging plays represented an exciting and demanding development for RADS and the audience of the Georgian Theatre Royal. The first accolade must surely go to Jim Brown who had the drive, vision and imagination to direct and light what was a truly memorable production. Jim's own in-depth longstanding academic knowledge and appreciation of 'Absurd Theatre' was so obvious in the sure-footed way in which the play was presented.

From the outset Joy Mills as Meg and her boringly long-suffering husband Bruce Cunningham as Petey brilliantly captured the remarkably mundane setting of a familiar seaside boarding house. Their consistently believable characters throughout the whole performance provided a baseline against which the bizarre developing plot became credible.

A powerful underlying sense of potential menace was injected by the superb performances of Mike Walker as Goldberg and Dan Cockett as McCann. Both actors were entirely credible from the outset and maintained their wholly convincing commitment to the complexity of these individuals who were simultaneously fascinating and despicable throughout. Dan's musical talent, so much appreciated in previous productions at The Georgian, was used appropriately and much enjoyed.

Jessica Inglis as Lulu managed to convey both innocence and beguiling worldliness, which made her both the temptress and the victim simultaneously. Each entry seemed like a breath of fresh air into an otherwise festering and oppressive environment.

Chris Wellings as Stanley Webber was superb. Moving apparently effortlessly from a sad introspective downtrodden individual to an aggressive quarry and back again to a depressed, defeated, dejected victim, Chris demonstrated his skills in a way that was entirely convincing.

Taken as a whole this was a truly impressive and appropriate production for RADS 80th anniversary and everyone associated should be rightly proud of what you have achieved.

I know from my own involvement with the Theatre that a huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes and that many hours of preparation and rehearsal are behind what the audience sees on the stage over a few evenings.

I have said before and would like to say yet again how fortunate Richmond is to have such a first-class amateur dramatic society and how much the trustees, staff, and volunteers of the Georgian Theatre Royal appreciate the on going contribution which you make to our success.

Long may RADS continue to thrive!

With all good wishes,

Mae

Malcolm J Bryant
Chairman
Georgian Theatre Royal