
Theatre Review

Last of the Red Hot Lovers

A large majority of the Wychwood Players loyal band of supporters missed *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* on June 1st to 3rd. Some 'regulars' were away but many more, we

suspect, succumbed to the first decent weekend of the summer and perhaps could have been found - Pimms in hand - lolling in their gardens. That is a crying shame! There have been many other lovely weekends since but we won't see the like of this Neil Simon gem for a very long time.

Better than Pimms!

The cast was small but perfectly formed. Director Mandyrae Large probably convened many rehearsals in her own living room since daughter Liz and partner Mark Jessey were conveniently available. Only Zoë Humphrey needed to travel from Witney to practice her latest dual roles of Elaine Navazio and Jeannette Fisher. Zoë is a true professional and W.P. audiences have been privileged to see her grow in ability and confidence over the years. This entry to her CV was a comedic treasure. Lizzie Large is just beginning her W.P. career. She wasn't quite as comfortable in her Bobbie Mitchell role as the other two cast members but was well rehearsed and gave a confident performance. We hope to see more of her.



Mark WAS Barney!

And then there was Mark Jessey as Barney Cashman, a fish restaurant owner in the throes of a mid-life crisis, so innocent that he chooses his mother's apartment as the

venue for his wildly inappropriate assignations. Mark WAS Barney - perhaps not quite as Jewish as he was Welsh - but in complete mastery of Neil Simon's lovable, totally honourable (but foolishly romantic) hero. The elderly mums in the audience were heard to cluck tenderly to themselves after his monumental three-and-a-half-page soliloquy, "There, there Barney love; it will all work out."

And it did of course. The ladies of the afternoon all had problems of their own and slipped away without solving Barney's dilemma. As the play ended, we saw our hero experience a -not-before-time denouement. He excitedly rang his wife and invited her to "meet him at Mother's" and "No, we're not invited to dinner!" We never heard Mrs. Cashman's reply to this late afternoon interruption in her busy day but we all left the theatre praying that dear old Barney finally scored on his home turf where he had - and always would - belong. To Mandyrae and Company - thanks for the early summer touch of Broadway. It was much better than a Pimms!

Trudy Yates