

Writtle CARDS – Comic Potential

Reviewer – Christine Davidson

For the March production Writtle Cards chose Comic Potential by Alan Ayckbourn.. Being his 54th play I hoped it would still be as funny as plays that brought him to fame in the 80's.

It is the 21st Century and a once big time American director Chandler Tate – loud, brash and well acted by Neil Smith is now reduced to directing futuristic daytime television soaps with robots called actoids who are manipulated by an electronic switchboard.

Along comes the handsome naïve Adam Trainsmith played with great humour and empathy by Ben Fraser who wants to persuade the powers-that-be to let him write some comedy scripts and work alongside the great Chandler Tate. He falls in love with an actoid called JC31333 or Jacey Triplethree as he calls her, who seems to have a mind of her own and a sense of humour. In an almost updated, futuristic version of Pygmalion he teaches her to read and act in comedy roles. As she gets more and more confused about her feelings she decides to be melted down and only at the end do you see her return to Adam, like Eliza Dolittle with Professor Higgins in Pygmalion and start her new life. This role was very ably played by Elaine Reynolds who really got to grips with being a robot and showing her feelings as the play went along – not an easy role to do.

The play was well supported by the other cast members who were on stage in various roles. Daniel Curley played the three roles of Adams' old crusty uncle Lester Trainsmith who only communicates through his sexy assistant Marmion, the hotel desk clerk and hotel waiter. He has the ability to become totally different characters on stage and with just the use of his face and voice, he shows what a really experienced talented comedy actor he is. His wife Liz Curley also had a great role as the ball breaking Carla Pepperbloom and she really seemed to have a wonderful time being totally mean to everyone until a custard pie was pushed into her face – marvellous! I am sure she really enjoyed playing up to Adam on stage!

The cast worked well as a team and obviously enjoyed working together and it showed. A lot of hard work went into this production and the director – Sarah Wilson must be pleased on how well it went. The audience really loved it and it was good to see a full house for this hard working group. Well done to all.