

THE MEMORY OF WATER BY SHELAGH STEPHENSON

WRITTLE CARDS – 3/7/09

Three sisters are thrown together at the eve of their mother Vi's funeral, played by the courageous Shirley Piggott who bravely took the role despite losing her husband shortly before auditions. This must have been a very hard play for her and I raise my glass to her for her sterling performance. The remembrance of her Alzheimer's condition was really haunting to watch.

In this emotional performance, directed by Nick Caton, we had the three sisters with totally contrasting memories of the mother and their family past, none seemed to have any warmth or empathy for their mother, or each other. In a run down bedroom with cracks in the wall, it made the small stage look even smaller but gave us the overpowering feeling of their sense of loss, and grief.

The three sisters were played by new member, Sharon Goodwin as Mary the doctor who is having an affair with married doctor Mark (Neil Smith), Jean Speller as the hard faced, domineering Teresa and Hazel Reilly as the insecure chaotic Catherine. All three worked well together and the hilarious scene at the end of act one when they dressed up in their mother's clothes getting drunk and high on reefers when Frank – Teresa's husband walk in at the end was marvellous. The two men had little to do in this play but still gave good performances especially Frank (Boot Banes) who was very comfortable on the stage and played the underdog to his wife with perfection.

This production lost something in the lighting when the blue light was used for Vi as the ghost. Both Vi and Mary sometimes lost their light and were in the dark. Additionally inappropriate shadow sometimes detracted from the effect. A little more pace & energy in the first half and reblocking Catherine away from stage right against the curtain during the second act would have improved a good production for this society.