



## One for the Road / Dumb Waiter

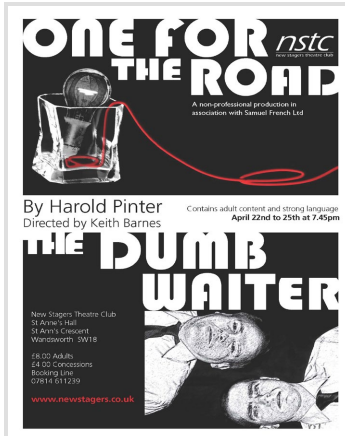
**Written by:** Harold Pinter

**Directed by:** Keith Barnes

**Performed:** Wednesday 22nd - Saturday 25th April 2009 at 7.45pm in St. Anne's Hall, Wandsworth

### Cast

### Crew



#### One for the Road

**Nicolas**  
**Victor**  
**Gila**  
**Nicky**

*Ian Pring*  
*Peter Nower*  
*Claire Poole*  
*Cedd Mumbycook*

#### Producer

Assistant Producer  
Stage Manager  
Lighting Operator  
Sound Operator  
Prompt

*Mark Stannett*  
*Emma Stallard*  
*Becca Stafford*  
*Lesley Tulley*  
*Daniel Lombard*  
*Janet McLaughlan*

#### The Dumb Waiter

**Ben**  
**Gus**

*Paul Johnson*  
*Richard Frampton*

## NODA Review by Tony Sweeney

### General

The evening consisted of two short plays by Harold Pinter. One For the Road was based around political torture in an un-named country and the Dumb Waiter invited us to view two hit men waiting to go into action. Despite the topics and the writing style of Pinter the cast carried it off well, clearly relishing the not inconsiderable challenges. That the country was unnamed gave One for the Road a timeless and even contemporary quality.

### Players

One for the Road consisted of a number of encounters between the head torturer, Nick (Ian Pring) and the family of three who were the victims. Ian dressed in black and conveyed a degree of menace in a subtle yet firm way. A good deal of this came from Pinter's script but he gave it a degree of realism without resorting to the stereotype so often used for this type of role. He used the space on stage well. Peter Nower as Victor conveyed the after effects of his physical mis-treatment well reacting consistently to touch or changes to seating etc. He was thrown on the stage and moved gingerly throughout. His body movements aided by make-up made his performance convincing. His role required him to remain on a chair in the centre of the stage and react whilst Nick circled around him. He managed to convey the fear using fairly subtle posture and speech tones. Claire Poole as Gila, played his wife, someone who had been subjected to rape and whose child had also been arrested and whose fate was unclear. She gave a convincing performance of someone under unbearable pressure facing death at a moments notice. Cedd Mumbycook played the young son of the other victims and conveyed the naivety of a young boy faced with oppression with great credibility. You got the impression that the adults were the main victims and that he was merely detained. This was not the case but he managed to play the part as if it was. He is a young man who has already developed a good acting style both realistic and credible. The Dumb Waiter consisted of only two characters, Richard Frampton as Gus the younger of the two hit men and Paul Johnson as Ben the senior partner. The play is set in a single room dominated by two beds and a cabinet which houses the dumb waiter conveying messages from a supposed café in the floors above. Richard played the part of the younger, less experienced, man with youthful exuberance whilst Paul had the more laid back style of someone who had been around much longer. This added to the characterisation making the end even more dramatic.

Both men worked well together holding the stage throughout. The performances were really quite absorbing.

#### Director

Keith Barnes as director used the space well. The stage is quite small and he kept the action focussed. Using mainly, the centre of the stage for One for the Road as the focal point. In the Dumb Waiter the space was again used to the full having the dumb waiter as a support to the action when messages came down in a seemingly random way. Much was implied off stage and this meant the tension mounted, from a gentle start to a dramatic conclusion.

#### Lighting

The lighting consisted of rig in front of the stage which was used to break up sections of the play and indicate intervals etc. The light levels also added to the sense of menace.

#### Set

One for the road as the first act was played out in front of a backcloth with tables and chairs as props. In many ways this allowed the audience to focus on the action in the centre of the stage, as the true nature of the play gradually unfolded. The Dumb Waiter set was revealed for the second act, this was well constructed consisting of a boiler type room equipped with two beds. In the centre of the stage a dumb waiter had been constructed and was used throughout (hence the title).

#### Props and Costumes

The costumes were contemporary, adding to the atmosphere and the timelessness of both plays. In One for the Road Nick wears black implying the villain, whilst Victor is dressed in light tones with patches of grime to indicate the innocent torture victim. Gila clothes are dishevelled again reinforcing the element of torture. Nicky wears ordinary clothes which lead one to feel (wrongly) that his treatment is not too bad. For the Dumb Waiter the cast had initially well concealed guns which became more noticeable as the play went on. Again the costumes were contemporary and this helped convey that this was an ordinary even normal situation.

#### Programme

There was a well designed programme using three colours. Given a history of Pinter and the pieces but fortunately not giving too much of the plot away, so the twists in both stories had the desired impact.

#### Front of House

I was greeted by the front of house staff and made to feel comfortable. I found them helpful and welcoming adding to the experience of the evening.

### **Production Photos** (Click to enlarge)



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