



The Blue Room

Written by: David Hare
Directed by: Julia Coleman and Sara Curnock Cook
Performed: Wednesday 4th - 7th May 2011 at The Colour House Theatre, Merton Abbey Mills

	Cast		Crew	
	GIRL	Kat Young	Assistant Director	Sara Curnock Cook
	CAB DRIVER	Mark Stannett	Producer	Lesley Tulley
	AU PAIR	Sharika Sharma	Sound Desk	Joanna Dodd
	STUDENT	Bai Kamara	Stage Manager	Becca Stafford
	MARRIED WOMAN	Vanessa Marchant	Lighting Desk	Richard Frampton
	POLITICIAN	Ian Pring	Front of House	Emma Stallard
	MODEL	Stephanie Gaydon		
	PLAYWRIGHT	Paul Johnson		
	ACTRESS	Rachel O'Reilly		
	ARISTOCRAT	Jake Flint		

NODA Review by Tony Sweeney

General

This is a rarely performed piece given real punch by the New Stagers. It was an opportunity for them to test their acting and technical talents to the full and the result was an amazing theatrical experience. Using a very small custom built theatre meant the environment also supported the work by giving every member of the audience a good view. It also meant the audience had a real engagement in an intimate atmosphere which was in keeping with the thrust of the play.

The venue, whilst purpose built, was considerably smaller than the group's normal one with the consequent reduction in audience numbers and subsequent potential revenues.

This was an interesting idea, a very thin plot involving couples involved in a variety of sexual scenarios. One of them stayed on for a second scene until the circle was complete. A study of casual sex which was interesting and a reflection of modern western society. The variety of characters gave a real range from strong to very insecure and was perhaps the most important aspect of the play. There was a real danger that this sort of play would not fully explore the deeper aspects and motivations of human attraction, but in this case it did so, and did so well.

Players

This was a well-cast group with the right age profile and bought a range of characters from all strata of society into play.

Director

Julia Coleman and Sara Curnock Cook's directions were well thought out with intelligent use of the space, lighting and the performers to maximum effect.

Stage Management

The stage management was excellent, using the cast members dressed in black to re-arrange the elements of the set between scenes with an almost choreographed set of movements, clearly visible, yet subtle as well. This was a nice touch, I felt, which helped keep things moving at a good pace. Without this the play would have become too disjointed.

Sound

The sound was clear and audible throughout which given the size of the theatre was, perhaps, understandable; however, it added to the audience's involvement in the evening.

Lighting

The lighting played a major part in the production. Apart from the usual variation between day and night it also provided the separation of scenes, along with masking the sexual aspects within each scene to give the play impact without being overt or salacious.

Set design

The set design was both simple and extremely flexible, converting with some ease to each of the 10 scenes through rearrangements.

Props

A number of props were well used, including bed linen, to reinforce the sexual nature of the play.

Costumes

The black stage hands' costumes were replaced by modern dress (including underwear) when the players performed in each little play let. This was a good device in that it helped define who was what and when.

Programme

The programme was excellent giving details on the play and performers.

Front of House

The front of house team were both welcoming and friendly, making each member of the audience feel part of what was going on. The setting was an excellent one, and we had the opportunity to take interval drinks in a very pleasant external environment close to a small river.

Production Photos (Click to enlarge)





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