

The play *Shakers* is one of a series of plays by writers John Godber and Jane Thornton, *Teechers & Bouncers* being two of the others in the series you may be familiar with.

Set in a 'trendy' 1980's cocktail bar, it depicts the lives of the four waitresses who work in the bar along with parodies of the customers who frequent it. The cast members switch between characters and the play moves along at a lively pace from start to finish.

This production was blessed with four extremely competent actresses, Nicki played by KERRY HIBBERT, Carol played by JENNY TAYLER-SURRIDGE, Mel, played by CASSIE ROUSE and Adele played by MADDIE PALMER.

They all embraced the challenge of performing not only the secrets and ambitions of the lives of four cocktail waitresses, but some of the characters they come into contact with. The four girls were strong across the board with their change of accents and different portrayals. They all managed to get across well the many moods and changes of character they were called upon to depict. It is much more difficult for women to depict men than vice versa but I think on the whole they did a splendid job. Loved the TV Yuppies, and the vagaries of the ladies loo and communal changing rooms!

It would be totally unfair to pick out any one member of this brilliant cast. All four actresses worked well as a team, although this script gives each character her own 'spot' and each was done with both confidence and conviction. The quality of the performance showed an understanding and empathy which most of the cast would not remember, having not been around to witness the yuppie excesses of the '80's.

The set was simple, just the cocktail bar and four chairs. The lighting was very effective, reflecting the mood of each scene well. Good choice of music too, which brought back memories of the period. If I had to pick out anything on the debit side it was the loudness of the music underscoring the dialogue in the first half. I was pleased it was lowered for act two as I was becoming distracted by it.

Director DAVID TICKNER made the decision to use the original script set in the 1980 and not *Shakers Re-stirred* which brings the show into the 1990s and, for me, it was the right decision, This was an extremely well-directed piece with the characters and interpretation of the writing brought to life in an impressive and believable way.

The loyal audiences that support Viva were certainly treated to a skilfully performed play with a difference which I am sure generated much nostalgic discussion on the way home.

Next up for Viva *Legally Blonde*. I can't wait!

Julie Petrucci

Regional Representative NODA East District Four South.