

REVIEW – Canned Laughter ****

✖ Allan Stewart wrote this 'Funny play about being funny' along with Ed Curtis who also directs. Who else would play the other roles in his first writing venture apart from Andy Gray and Grant Stott?

The story involves a comedy act which was big in the 70s (when we had the Bay City Rollers – remember them?) and which has somehow or another not lasted the pace to the present day. Stewart, as Alec is the only one left in show business. So how did that happen?

The story of what exactly happened unfolds right to the end of the play, and it is one which takes place with one cleverly designed set. With a flick of a switch the same space is the stage, backstage and behind the curtain. It is always intriguing how a touring show can up sticks and travel to the next theatre with ease, but this set will surely mean that everything fits on one truck! There is a clever lighting scheme for the more sensitive moments, of which there are a few.

The rapport which has built up among these three actors has taken a number of years on the panto stage, a bit of blood, sweat and tears and a load of laughs. But when Stewart wanted to stage a play with some music thrown in he realised that he alone could play a musical instrument (although the others do try!) He also realised that they would need a fourth member of the cast, and in Gabriel Quigley they have a safe pair of hands to play Mags.



But don't go to see this play expecting it to be a laugh a minute. It is not, but at the same time it is very funny indeed. Many belly laughs from all parts of the audience attest to that, and the older audience in Kirkcaldy's Adam Smith Theatre certainly appreciated the humour from an earlier age. A little more than reminiscent of Eric Morecambe, Andy Gray plays the audience and soon has them wrapped round his little finger, playing their part to the full.

There are good lines and there are great lines. The audience is involved in the story right from the off, but I am not going to tell you what comes off – you will see that in the first few minutes for yourselves!

By the time they get to the King's Theatre in a couple of weeks' time they will probably have this play honed to the point of ad libbing just a little more than was evident tonight, but what we saw this evening was classic fun with solid, slick dialogue.

Oh, and it was very funny!



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