

Theatre – interview with Siobhan Redmond

The Edinburgh Reporter was given the opportunity to interview Siobhan Redmond who has been appearing at [The Royal Lyceum Theatre](#) during this last week. The production ends tonight.



TER: Notwithstanding the intense preparation and rehearsals for this scurrilously divine production, you and the ensemble cast seem to be having more damnably good time fun than is strictly necessary! Explain yourselves!

SR: “We are indeed having a good time on this play: it’s a proper ensemble piece and I’m really enjoying working with these actors, some of whom I’ve known for years, some of whom are new to me and all of whom I admire. It’s a lovely play full of surprises, and it’s joyful to be speaking in Scots to audiences who really relish hearing it. Also there’s the fun of cocking a snook at and simultaneously celebrating life in the theatre, and doing it while dressed in the most beautiful costumes I’ve ever worn. What’s not to love?”

TER. It certainly seems that you all glided into Liz Lochhead’s alternative reality Scots’ Parisian world with relish ? Was it ever thus?

SR. “You might anticipate that this play would be *recherché*, as they say in Paris, but it sounds and feels like home. Jimmy Chisholm, our Molière, describes the language Liz writes in as Lizwegian: it’s not easy to learn but it’s fun to speak and it goes straight to the heart. I’m lucky enough to have worked with Liz over the course of hundreds of years now- she gave me my first job- and I love the technical challenges she throws at her actors. Though I do moan at her which she blithely ignores.”

TER. Confession is good for the soul and even better for gossip. Had you had your eye on this part for some time? Any girlie collusion going on that made an offer to casting they couldn't refuse?

SR. "Since giving me that first job when I was 20, Liz has been kind/deluded enough to badger casting departments on my behalf on several subsequent occasions and this is one of them. She says it helps when writing to have specific actors' voices in her head whether or not those actors end up playing the characters. Thank goodness for that!"

TER. You and Jimmy Chisholm seem to be sharing some skulduggerous private joke on stage! Was it just that kind of magic?

SR. "Let me put you straight on this: the thing that rips my knitting most grievously as a theatre-goer, more than lazy, underpowered or inaudible performances, more than ludicrous ticket prices, no legroom and three Ladies' loos to a thousand women in the audience is actors titting about onstage, apparently engaged in a private joke of some kind which they haven't bothered to share with the rest of us. So, no, Jimmy and I are absolutely **NOT** doing that. He is a fabulously entertaining man and may well be involved in a private joke with himself but I am merely loving working with him at long last and loving the Molière he plays as much as my character Madeleine does. Also, as must surely be apparent to you by now, I have absolutely no sense of humour...."

TER (No sense of humour but stiletto lethal Ciceronian taking the pith, possibly!)

TER: The Molière we part empathise, part condemn on stage is an ambivalent, complex character. Knowing his biography, how much did you admire, love and find repellant about him?

SR: "Great artists may well have dodgy private lives: mind you, which of us could withstand the rigorous scrutiny to

which the home lives of those great artists are routinely subjected? People who make us laugh are to be celebrated in a world which is often sad and sore and whatever the by now unknowable truth of Molière's marriage he is a great satirist, comedian and playwright. I'm on Team Molière."

TER. It has to be said, if only to pad out this interview, there is something of the Jean Brash tenacious wit and sage humanity you bring to this role. It would help enormously if you agreed...

SR: "Oh I loved playing Jean Brash- the final series of McLevy goes out on Radio 4 in November and I'm hoping for a few letters of complaint to the BBC if not for full-scale rioting in the streets of Leith. Yes, she's a wise and witty woman like Madeleine in Thon Man Molière and knows a thing or six about how the world works and the human heart ticks. I will miss her and I'll miss Madeleine too at the end of this play."

TER: In no more than five words, tell us why the good people of Edinburgh and beyond should catch this show?

SR: "Speaks right to the heart! Or, alternatively: great play, great production, funny!"