



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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THE RECRUITING OFFICER

Blackwood Players

Blackwood Memorial Hall

Until 15 October 2016

Review by Fran Edwards

This play by George Farquhar was the first performed in the colony of NSW, before it was really a state and before Australia existed, in 1789. What was described as convicts under the auspices of the newly appointed Governor Phillips performed a 'ribald comedy'. Blackwood players have created a set which looks like the canvas tent that the convicts would have performed in and presented a very tongue-in-cheek performance that focuses on fun.

Director Damien White has kept the feeling light and for the most part this works. Settings are easily placed and removed although occasionally the changes seem a little slow, and this causes the action to drag a little, especially in the second act. Costumes are simple as they would have been in that 1789 performance.

Damien White, apart from directing, plays the Servant and the Constable, small parts but both played for comedy and with great accents. Ron Densley does well in two parts Mr Worthy and Costar Pearman, requiring quick changes which he did so well I needed to check the program to be sure it was the same man. His characterization of both was good. As the rake Captain Plume Jabez Retallick carries the tale along assisted by Scott Brokenshire as Sergeant Kite, who tries to aid but seems to hamper.

Melanie Remen and Karina Black play their ladies Sylvia and Melinda with an understanding of the era. Both need a little more volume in the quieter scenes. David Lockwood plays Sylvia's father, Justice Balance, with all the necessary gravitas. Heather Crawford, as the wench Rosie, brings an extra comic element to the performance. Debbie Jeffries, Jacqui Hart and Peter Fry are the other players.

This play is a bit of a departure for Blackwood, not the usual comedy fare; it will be interesting to see how well it is received. A fun production which made a pleasant evening.