

reviews



(l-r) Richard Ryan, Ophélie Durand, Karim Bouriah-Lopez and Julien Cayeux in Melbourne French Theatre Company's *Every Trick in the Book*. Photo by Jean-Philippe Héon.

EVERY TRICK IN THE BOOK (LE SYSTÈME RIBADIER)

by Georges Feydeau

Melbourne French Theatre

Directed by Alec Gilbert

Reviewed by David Collins – September 7, 2017

Every Trick in the Book was theatrical origami: the cast doing their best to move and bend themselves in a very small space to tell a witty and entertaining story.

Angèle (Alexandra Octavia) is convinced her husband, Ribadier (Julien Cayeux), is cheating on her but just can't find the proof she needs. It turns out he is betraying her, through the use of hypnotism. He puts her in a trance, slips out and then returns and snaps her out of it. Complications arise with the arrival of Angèle's old flame Thommereux (Karim Bouriah-Lopez), and Savinet (Michel Bula), the husband of Ribadier's mistress. And all the while, the Chauffeur, Gusman (Richard Ryan) and the Maid, Sophie (Ophélie Durard) flirt and banter, sharing their own frisson of romantic excitement.

There were plenty of nice touches here. The music warbled over things with a hint of faint radio static, warm and nostalgic. Aye

IMPORTANT: REVIEWS COPYRIGHT

The reviews of plays published in *Theatrecraft* are copyright and, if reproduced in your theatre company newsletter, must not be edited but reproduced in their entirety. Please credit that the review of your production is from *Theatrecraft* published by The Victorian Drama League.

Bañez and Krystal Pakoti did excellent work with the costumes from the various hats, suits and a long gold dress Alexandra wore at one point that was thoroughly pulchritudinous.

Richard and Ophélie were an absolute delight in their *Downton Abbey*-esque subplot. Michel carried the role of Savinet with great energy and purpose. Karim looked dapper as Thommereux, bringing a charming naïve sense of humour to the role. Julien's performance included a lot of winks out to the audience, which worked for the most part, striking a fine balance between being a horrible husband but not necessarily an evil person. Alexandra was stunning, with no shortage of moxie or spirit in her brilliant performance as Angèle.

Melbourne French Theatre made good use of what was a rather small space for the crowd size. It should have been impractical to try and squeeze that many people in a room with no ventilation, but, to their credit, they made it work, the audience not so much cramped as they were snug.

In the end, it was a beautiful production from a company that continues to make great art.

ALMOST, MAINE

by John Cariani

Wyndham Theatre Company

Directed by Elaine Beek

Reviewed by Andrew Gemmell – October 14, 2017

This production is an example of the collaboration that is increasingly evident in community theatre; that between a local company and a nearby school. It is an arrangement made in heaven: an under-utilised, government-owned public resource combined with an under-funded, enthusiastic company. This idea reaches its