Review: Private Fears in Public Places.
By Alan Ayckbourn

Now then. Here's a thing, three male and three female characters. Now shake...Or stir if you prefer, and there you have it, a cocktail called “Attraction”.
Relationships of the private and professional variety are the theme of Ayckbourn’s Private Fears in Public Places and the spectator should appreciate the difficulties in presenting a piece which must do this by being both truthful yet funny.

This was my first visit to see a play presented by Phoenix theatre company and I’ve a soft spot for their choice of venue in Farnworth Little Theatre having done a few one act festivals there. Their choice of an almost traverse stage arrangement was both versatile and effective.

Hats off to that mythical bird I say. Seriously a fabulous afternoon of entertainment with a cast that has bonded seamlessly. I think best described as a mosaic of short scenes in which the characters entwine in a seamless and entertaining fashion. Like if Theatre did great Tapas, the direction and formula of each scene was fresh and self-contained and therefore engaged my attention throughout.
The simple set serves it’s purpose to represent different scene locations easily, but without any disrespect to anyone involved in the play or set-design this is one that wants you to concentrate on the characters- and therefore I rarely noticed the set myself- I guess that’s a good thing. Some neat light and sound effects were applied seamlessly though.
The comedy is rife and layered, to which I was pleasantly surprised given my preconceptions of this being one of the writers more serious approaches to drama. Then again, Alan is jolly good as that sort of misdirection thing.
The bouts of social complications come thick and fast, at times I imagined manifested as some of the seven sins, and at times, it is a bit naughty and it knows it- again I like this a lot.

Bravo to all the cast Joy, Caroline, Janet, John, Sam, Matt and director Dave and to all the rest of Phoenix. You gained a fan today. 2 hours of interval- less Theatre flew by and was sincerely appreciated by this humble boy.

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