

Scene One (Review) 13th February 2010

Bouncers, Arena Theatre, Regent Centre, Christchurch

To arrive at a theatre to be greeted by two, apologies in advance, foreboding “toughies” in dinner attire, and one could quite understandably wonder what was in store. The answer very quickly became clear – a superbly executed “night out” where the audience was introduced to an array of experienced clubbers, their relationships and expectations.

The small (5 in total) cast members quickly made their mark as through the eyes of the “Bouncers” the audience viewed various members of society, male and female, at various stages of a typical night out, from the preparation, a hilariously choreographed male checklist, through to the taxi ride home, complete with inevitable kebab stop.

Credit must go to the fine cast who delivered first class performances, Les (Scott Sullivan), Judd (Pete Griffiths), Ralph (Simon Meredith) and notably Lucky Eric (Russell Biles) who under the skilful direction of Paul Nelson managed to bring a strong element of Men (and women) Behaving Badly to the stage.

The various snapshots into the lives of differing groups of people, brought together at the night club were ably supported by Adam Donoghue whose kebab seller was particularly entertaining.

The simple set, clever lighting and sound effects all contributed to create the atmosphere in this very funny and also extremely moving play.

Sarah Vandervelde

Further performance at Avonbourne School on March 4th

MY colleague sang the praises of Bouncers when it was at the Regent Centre a few weeks ago so I took the opportunity to catch up with it when it was repeated at Avonbourne School - minus Adam Donoghue, whose roles on this occasion were played by director Paul Nelson - and I can only echo all that she said.

What particularly struck me, apart from the superb performances, was how much of a part was played by the considerable amount of non-verbal communication, which was brilliantly done and meant that the rapid changes of character and sex were never in the least confusing. It came into its own particularly during the final scene, set in a taxi after a booze-fuelled night, and left me almost crying with laughter.

I was also impressed at how the ‘bouncers’ remained in character as the audience arrived, especially as a good percentage of that audience was teenage girls from the school who no doubt had a few comments to make on their way in.

Russell Biles, Scott Sullivan, Pete Griffiths, Simon Meredith and Paul Nelson – you just couldn’t have been better, making John Godber’s funny, profound script absolutely come to life with a vengeance.

Linda Kirkman