

## The Tamaritans – Daisy Pulls It Off, Wednesday 19th July

Written by Denise Deegan, based on Winifred Norling's 1939 novel 'The Testing of Tansy' and set in the 1920's, the story centres around Daisy Meredith from a poor background who wins the first ever scholarship to a prestigious girl's public school, Grangewood with all its prejudices, bullying and class snobbery associated with public schools of the period. Added to that was a sub plot of missing treasure and a long-lost father, leading to the eventual triumph of our heroine who is also involved in a dramatic cliff rescue.

I have to admit I had little knowledge of this play prior to my invitation and made sure to do some prior reading ahead of attending. It was very intriguing to see a cast consisting solely of adults playing the parts of younger secondary school students but it seems this is indeed the most common format that this play is performed in. The cast worked well together and after the initial surprise of the ages being depicted the audience were able to fully embrace the production for what it was.

The set constructed in-house led by Niall Clinton and consisted of the back wall of wood panelling; typical of a country house style adorned with paintings of the school's founder and an empty frame. To stage right was a very old-fashioned desk to create the headteachers office. All other scenery was depicted using movable furniture, including chairs moved by the pupils themselves and very reminiscent of the old school days of the 1950's and 60's.

The costumes were very well coordinated by Pearl Potts and were classic school uniforms featuring traditional styled tunics and for the teachers suits and skirts typical of the era.

The first pair, Daisy Meredith played by and her ever faithful pal Trixie Martin were the backbone and heroines of the story with Daisy often breaking the 4th wall to act as narrator, talking about herself in the third person, which I thought was a neat bit of script writing and all very well interpreted by the two actresses. I must give special mention to Daisy as she really did lead this cast with such a strength.

The Head of School, Clare Beaumont and her fellow prefect Alice had some wonderful expressions, showing their status with a kind but stern attitude towards the other pupils. Accent work throughout their performances were excellent.

The principal, Miss Gibson, was absolutely spot on. She had all the right mannerism and looks of shock horror at the various antics of the girls.

Mr Scobrowski put on his best Eastern European accent to give us a little mystery, as he crept around in a very suspicious manner until his motives are revealed. Periodic whistling was heard throughout the production emanating from the gardener Mr Thompson, who it turns out has the answer, albeit with a little detective work from Daisy and Trixie, to both Daisy's background and the missing treasure.

The hockey match was performed in a very stylised manner with the girls themselves narrating the match as they moved in sync looking directly out to the audience. This was a nice touch and worked effectively.

Finally all the school songs were sung with a loud aplomb in strong acapella. A bold move to sing without music though a strong sound indeed.

It's safe to say, Daisy certainly did pull it off!

Kind regards

Ryan Procter

District 3 Representative

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