

REVIEW OF THE PRIVATE EAR & THE PUBLIC EYE by Peter Shaffer

BREWHOUSE STUDIO

Thursday 15th November 2007

The Brewhouse Studio was a perfect venue for this lovely double bill by Shaffer. Creative Cow is a recently formed company who are building a repertoire of 'exceptional one act plays... on a quality shoestring', to quote their website, www.creativecow.co.uk

Sensitively and tellingly directed by Amanda Knott, the plays are period gems, set in the early sixties. What struck me immediately was the attention to detail: the set, the soundtrack and, in particular, the actors' voices. In the first piece, there was a definite estuary twang to all the accents, but not a glottal stop, fudged consonant or crude vowel sound to be heard. Beautifully enunciated, the voices brought the era back to me more tellingly than anything else. Jack Hulland was magnificent as the oily Ted, who succeeds in pulling his friend Bob's girl, Doreen (expertly drawn for us by Katherine Senior), behind his back. Jonathan Parish made our hearts bleed as the luckless Bob, who tries to score by playing Peter Grimes to her, and Doreen's squirming body language and gobsmacked pauses were perfect.

After the interval, the same three versatile actors performed The Public Eye, which called for a totally different dynamic, different accents. Jonathan Parish as the Greek private dick Julian could perhaps have had slightly wilder and weirder clothes, from which he could have produced even more sweetmeats to gorge on, but this small and talented company painted a beautiful picture of sixties London, pulled at our heartstrings and made us laugh. I look forward enormously to their version of Pinter's The Lover next year.

JANE EDWARDS