



Powerful Performances Light Up *Veronica's Room*

TNIM's spring production of *Veronica's Room*, written by Ira Levin and ably directed by Margaret Shearman, showcased the impressive acting ability of our members.



Alyson Reid and Raymond Compton-Brown gave powerhouse performances as they brought the "multiple personalities" of their characters to vibrant life on stage. They smoothly transitioned from jovial old couple to angry domineering parents to very disturbing family unit without a misstep. Alyson's strong stage presence was perfect for her role. Her emotional roller coaster into madness was nicely played. I particularly liked Raymond's seamless shift from heavy-handed father to submissive brother/husband. They even did a nice job with the accents in Act 1.



Susan (Amber) learns why she shouldn't talk to strangers... Alyson & Raymond transform from cuddly caretakers into parents from hell.

TNIM newcomer Amber Kirby also gave a very good performance in the demanding role of Susan. The part is emotionally and physically demanding with Susan moving from naiveté to anger to terror as she is ensnared by the others. And, as the character is on stage for the whole play, there is a lot of dialogue and blocking to remember. Amber did a very nice job of sustaining these emotional highs while still hitting her marks throughout Act 2.

Steve Anderson was a bit uneven in the performance I saw. He did a nice job in his dual roles in Act 2 (I liked his petu-

lance as the son), but, ironically, he didn't come across as well playing the boyfriend in Act 1. Part of the problem may have been his regrettably oversized jacket and really bad moustache, but his interaction with Susan was a bit of a weak spot in Act 1. This may have been a deliberate choice given the Act 2 developments, but it was still off-putting while watching Act 1, and it did lessen the element of surprise when he returned in Act 2.

Alyson & Raymond do a great job with the emotional transitions of their demanding roles.



Before and After. Steve cleans up nicely in Act 2.



Director Margaret Shearman deserves credit for getting all these fine performances from her cast - and keeping them hitting those right notes - while meshing them all into a dramatic whole. The blocking and use of the stage was good, as were the action scenes. I'd also like to give director and cast kudos for the excellent pacing, which was so important to preventing the melodrama from bogging down. Even the few times I suspected there was trouble with the lines, it didn't throw off the pace. Impressive.

The set was nicely designed by Andrea Howard, and Brian Fitzpatrick's set dressings were well-suited to the play and gave a nice sense of realism. Costumes were generally good (except for that jacket), although the white dress made Amber look rather washed out (it may have been more effective in the rehearsal space). I liked the nice contrast of costumes for Alyson and Raymond between Acts 1 & 2 (and who doesn't like Raymond in a smoking jacket).

"And this better mean a raise in my allowance!" Steve's character takes care of the family dirty work.

Gordon Weber's poster design was another winner.

"You're not the boss of me!" Susan (Amber) stands up to Alyson's character...but to no avail.



The director, cast & crew should be congratulated for a really strong production of this play! However, I must say neither Omar nor I liked the play itself that much. We found its gothic melodrama a little too contrived (or possibly the psychodrama is too dated?). Whatever it was, it made the revelations less gripping and undercut the strong performances of the actors. I don't think this one has stood the test of time as well as some older plays we have done recently. Perhaps just our opinion, but also an issue to be conscious of as we select our future plays.



-photographs by John Chambers