

Silver Lining by Sandi Toksvig
29th November 2023

This play was set in a retirement home in Gravesend, where a group of residents find themselves marooned during a storm, as the flood waters rise around their home. With hope of rescue fading, they resolve to make their own escape, which was not going to be easy when two of the ladies are in wheelchairs.

The ladies, Gloria Bernhardt was expertly played by *Babs Denton* suitably adorned in leopard skin print leggings and top together with lashings of jewellery, was the mainstay of the cast. She had some very witty lines, which she delivered with waspish timing and was very expressive. Maureen Cookson (Elaine Leggett) as the faded actress was very good. Her prowess in hat-making out of disposable bedpans was amazing, relating everything to a theatrical performance. Her fight with burglar, Jed (Luke Frewin), was a sight to behold and, rightly, drew a round of applause. May Trickett (*Debi Diacon*) was very condescending from her wheelchair and felt herself superior to the other residents, having worked for the BBC. Her sister, June Partridge (*Ann Francis*) was suitably vague being under the shadow of May. Hope Daley, (*Grace Olusola*) was very commanding in her presence and stature, being the temporary help for the residents and in spite of her fear of water, being unable to swim, she marshalled the ladies into building a boat with which to escape, showing authority and capability. St Michael (*Liz Hutchinson*) – yes, I was confused, too – but so called because the only identification was on her under-garment label – hence ‘St Michael’. Although quiet, she had great expression and her growth in confidence was very effective, complete with her collection of ‘toys’. Jed (Luke Frewin) was a delightful cameo part, which he played to great effect. He was sufficiently menacing and kept up the pretence that he had come to rescue the residents until his true purpose was revealed.

There were many prompts, which affected the pace of the play and resulted in many of the witty lines being lost, although there were extenuating circumstances for this. The ladies could have been a bit louder, enabling all lines to be heard at the back of the hall.

However, the soliloquies of the individual ladies were very well performed, revealing their histories, many of which were particularly colourful.

The finale of all (including one deceased resident), boarding the home-built boat, made with tables and large water flagons as flotation devices, was a masterpiece.

Despite the few hiccups, the play was very well directed, by Denise Santilli and Gareth Hammond, with very good light and sound was enjoyed by all.

Congratulations to all.

Nigel James