
Written by the brilliant Hugh Whitemore, this play has gradually become more and more popular with amateur societies as Alan Turing has slowly become a household name. One of the great travesties of modern times, it tells the story of his homosexuality and subsequent treatment by the authorities against the backdrop of his equally secret life as the key player in the code breaking activities at Bletchley Park during World War II and his subsequent university life until his death in 1954. It’s a brave play to take on and requires acting skills of the highest order to pull it off. I’ve now seen it several times and I will immediately state this was the best so far and the previous productions certainly didn’t let anybody down either.

Designed by the director himself, Dean Laccohee, the simple but effective set was a backdrop of the image of an enigma keyboard (interestingly pre QWERTY as I notice the Y is replaced by a Z?) (Editors note: the QWERTZ layout is the layout used on German keyboards instead of the English QWERTY), a table, a couple of chairs and a bench which allowed the acting to move seamlessly between scenes. It was appropriately well lit by Edd Welsh and Max Richardson with good sound quality by Paul Macleod.

The principal character in this play is obviously Turing himself and it is an extremely wordy role requiring exceptional skills by the actor to pull it off. In Nathanael Spalding I can say Huntingdon Drama Club are very lucky to number him amongst their ranks, as he is clearly a rare talent with a mouth-watering career ahead of him. His delivery of lines and particularly the monologues really were sublime. He rarely let the pace drop, kept the audience engaged at all times and I came away thinking he is one of those actors you would go and see no matter what the play. I look forward to following his career with interest.

Not I hasten to add that the rest of the cast were exactly second rate, in fact it will almost undoubtable be the case that without this strong support Mr Spalding might not have impressed so much.

Ryan Laccohee as the police detective, Mick Ross, showed his professional credentials and was the outstanding foil to Turin. Obviously an actor of huge experience he brought gravitas to the role, with a mixture of bewilderment, duty and sympathy to this naïve genius whose exceptional intelligence at first failed to fool with his robbery cover story and then failed to grasp the reality of confessing to a gay relationship in post war Britain. Laccohee pitched this mixture of emotions with just the right touch and the interview scenes between the two of them were for me the highlights of the play.

Scott Hutchison as ‘Dilly’ Knox the man who recruited Turing to Bletchley is obviously another experienced actor whose role really couldn’t be faulted.

Ben Pereira as Ron Miller the boyhood friend and Turing’s first love, brought a delicate touch to a role that has to portray a journey of bewildering sexual discovery. To be an adolescent growing up in an age where sexuality, let alone homosexuality, was generally suppressed is something modern audiences might find hard to understand. Pereira and Spalding came a long way to putting such attitudes across, their eye contact and body language being particularly well used.

Ann Monk as Turing’s very ‘middle class’ mother seemingly more interested in the practicalities of the everyday running of a home than her son’s sexuality hit the spot well and especially portrayed that early fifties reassuring attitude of ‘let’s pretend it’s not happening and get on with making tea,’ whilst suppressing her own fears for his naïve behaviour. A good mixture of the anxious and the stiff upper lip.
Sharon Reed as Pat Green, Turing’s great friend and one time fiancé gave a difficult role the right
degree of awkwardness and sensitivity, as Turing himself goes through the journey in his mind as to
whether or not to present a conventional face to the World.

Guido Paoluzi Cusani making his debut on stage certainly didn’t let the side down in this small but
important role as Turing’s lover. The same could be said of Harrison Lake as Christopher and not to
mention the director himself making a cameo appearance as John Smith.

As I said in my first paragraph this was a class production, well cast and well directed by Dean
Laccohee and very well received by an appreciative audience. Sadly, not a full house and the good
citizens of Huntingdon therefore missed a rare treat - their loss, my gain!

So congratulations to James Rowe and his team, I look forward to seeing more of their work in the
future.

Richard Fitt
NODA Representative Area 2,
(standing in for Sandra Samwell)