

Ladies in Lavender a critically acclaimed success

The recent production of Ladies in Lavender was the Detling Players' entry for the Kent Drama Awards (<http://www.kentdrama.org.uk>). The play was adjudicated during the Friday evening performance, and most of the audience stayed to hear Charles Evans give his verdict on the production, which was very favourable. Afterwards he wrote to Richard Finn, the Director, as follows:

"I very much appreciated your sensitive and ingeniously staged production of Ladies in Lavender. The piece, in its subtle blend of pathos and humour, is a demanding choice of production; but the story came alive right through the variety of characters, and with such a delicacy of touch.

Please convey my thanks and appreciation to your cast and Crew and congratulations once again for achieving such a successful entry in the Kent festival."

Also see John Munson's review on the next page.

Listening to feedback from the audience, the set design and construction came in for much praise, and undoubtedly contributed to the success of the production. Without appearing in any way contrived, the set managed to convey the impression of four quite separate but contiguous areas for performance, so many thanks to Derek and Terry for their hard work in constructing the set, and of course to Tikki and all the people who spent hours in the school hall wielding their paint-brushes with such expertise

I personally found it to be one of the most enjoyable and moving productions I have ever been involved with

Congratulations to all concerned

Now - we need to focus on the next production in November!



Ladies in Lavender: Review by John Munson

The Play is derived from a short story written in 1906 by William Locke. Screenplay written by well known actor Charles Dance, who directed the film. Shaun McKenna then adapted the screenplay for the stage. The theme of the play is of a rather mature lady falling in love with a handsome young man who is a well practised player of the violin. You can tell it is an old fashioned story because nowadays the sisters would be on a computer looking up dating web sites.! A washed up body would bring out a rescue helicopter looking for other survivors and the police and South West Ambulance Service would take possession of the lone survivor. Disbelief has to be suspended in watching this story. How did the players do? Very well!

The set was magnificent. The builders and decorators deserve awards. A play that demands four sets, because it is adapted from a film where swift editing is possible, is inevitably rather episodic as people in dark costumes change the sets. But the bedroom was an excellent bedroom with a real brass four poster; the Beach worked; the Garden looked lovely and the little old fashioned sitting room was delightfully aspiring 1930s middle class. The lighting and sound were of the usual Detling Players very high quality.



Linda Russell knows how to act. As the rather critical, perhaps jealously so, Janet she slotted in perfectly into this claustrophobic relationship with her sister Ursula. Still suffering from the loss of her Peter she was very sensitive when she answered the naïve and innocent questions of her sister.

Penny Rogers as Ursula was delightfully different in her labelling of furniture. Had either of the sisters ever worked? Ursula would have made a wonderful infant teacher. Linda and Penny will stay in our memories as the two sisters. Rachael Newton in a former life just must have been in service, I bet her Toad in the Hole would be a Bake Off Winner. She was the perfect servant, looking after the two old ladies. John Watson had trouble with his hat, you only put it on as you leave the house. He kept forgetting, because his mind was occupied with Olga. His scene when he offered Olga Half his sandwich was beautifully done, as was the scene when he realised that Andrea was a cut above the local orchestra. You were convincing as the local GP John, did Gavin give you advice?

Somebody said to me that Kathryn's Olga was the best they have seen her on stage. I agreed, her painting scenes on the Beach with the poor old doctor and her scenes with Andrea as she convinced him of his future in New York were very finely worked.

I believe that Owen Luckhurst had most of the mature ladies in the audience rather weak at the knees after watching his part in the drama. The violin playing in the garden, the bedroom scenes when the doctor wrestled off the old dressing and his trays in bed, the star gazing pie(?), all of those Owen did those with great confidence. Even his little burst of anger when he found his letter had been destroyed. But advice from a mature man, watch out for those mature ladies Owen.

One mature lady said quite loudly, "The best they've ever done!". I believe there were other previous directors present! But it was very good. It might get an award in the Kent Festival, I would not be surprised. So well done Detling. Well done Richard Finn, the director, who brought this whole team together, Not an easy task!

Latest news! Ladies in Lavender nominated for 6 awards in the KDA Play Festival!!

It seems that John Munson wasn't the only person to be impressed. Charles Evans, the KDA Adjudicator, has announced the nominations for Awards as follows:

Best Actor:	Owen Luckhurst
Best Actress in a supporting role:	Kathryn Shirley
Best Set Design:	Derek Lawrence and Terry Trivett
Sound	
Initiative in Stage Presentation	
Best Stage Presentation	

The Award ceremony will be on 18th June in Detling Village Hall.

Brett Baker

It is with great sadness that I have to advise that Brett Baker died peacefully in Hospital over the weekend - he was waiting for a liver transplant but became ill very quickly and could not bounce back to get the transplant he so dearly needed.

He will be remembered for his huge contribution to last year's production of *Dick Whittington*, where his good timing and natural sense of humour came to the fore.

I certainly enjoyed rehearsing and acting with Brett, and I am personally deeply saddened by his death.

John Watson



Future events

Jul 27 Digital Theatre, *Into the Woods*: Chris Hall, at the School Hall

Aug 14 Detling mystery walk

Sept 28 Reading of local playwright Dennis Lipscombe's *Theatrical Knights*

Oct 26 Stage Management workshop: Chris Hall, Dickie Dawson

Nov 10,11,12 Autumn production

Full details can be found on our website, www.detlingplayers.co.uk