

Production
Society

Waiting for Gateaux
Cosmopolitan Players

Adjudication Comments

Adjudicators

Charlotte King	Sat 19 Oct	Matinee
Emma Thomson	Thu 17 Oct	Evening
Jenny Wemyss	Sat 19 Oct	Matinee
James Sidgwick	Sat 19 Oct	Matinee
Anjana Dey Clark	Sat 19 Oct	1pm

Production Comments

Direction

Charlotte King	The play was delivered and staged in a really cohesive way. Actors performed really confidently and there was a clear impression of a well rehearsed and prepared performance. The performance captured the funny side of diet culture and brought out the endearing characters relationships in a way that felt familiar and really relatable.
Emma Thomson	The direction of this piece was clear and well thought out. It was apparent the director had worked on character interactions and these were fun to watch throughout the show
Jenny Wemyss	Waiting for Gateaux was well directed. The small studio space must always be a challenge but here it never felt stagnant. There was plenty of movement in the blocking and characters were able to play all areas of the space. This was teamed with great pace throughout, ensuring the comedy hit very well. In a few moments where actors were on the floor near the very front of the stage, I wondered if some of the audience further back would have struggled to see them, but given the fast pace this wouldn't have been for too long. The limited entrances and exits were used well, clearly defining the setting for us to become engrossed in. I really liked the use of backstage space being opened up for Sophies phonecall to be made outside too.
James Sidgwick	This show was a lot of fun. The staging was well done, clearly showing where we were and why. The cast were well rehearsed, the pacing was good and no opportunities for the show's laughs were missed. The cast were all really solid on their lines and roles, it felt really well rehearsed and slick, particularly from the performers.
Anjana Dey Clark	Director's vision for the piece is clear evidenced by the small, intimate setting and choice of venue. Staging and transitions were smooth and motivated and served their purpose. The actors delivered effective performances and the pacing was consistent and appropriate to the genre of the show. Research into the time period was adequate to good in that the setting and subject matter related to the time described. The design and technical elements supported the style and production concept.

Scenic Design and Properties

Charlotte King	The set worked really well, capturing the feel of a small town health club. The lack of fussy scene changes allowed the pace to move swiftly and effectively. I really appreciated the thoughtful and funny touches like the recipes and artfully placed balloons.
Emma Thomson	I thought the space in the studio was decorated well with the scenery needed to bring the play to life. It was used effectively and didn't feel overcrowded when cast were also on stage. Scene changes were generally smooth and well executed
Jenny Wemyss	The scenery itself was minimal but this fitted appropriately with the village hall style exercise classes it was alluding to. Lovely attention to detail had been paid to the sourcing and making of props. The flip charts with their funny recipes on really made me chuckle and were a nice touch. There was plenty of exercise equipment for the actors to busy themselves with, allowing a circuit to be possible despite limited space. The step machine could have done with some grease so it didn't squeak over the actors speaking, though it was dealt with well. All of these props appearing from the offstage worked nicely and the oar was particularly funny! More details such as the cardboard cutout changing with the seasons were lovely, right down to the attention to detail by adding snow to the actors coming in from the storm.
James Sidgwick	Good use was made of the limited space. I enjoyed the use of the recipe board which gave a clear indication of the spirit of the characters and themes. The inclusion of Schwarzenegger photos on either side was a nice touch, though with them both being of Schwarzenegger, I was expecting them to be mentioned at some point - as they were just decorative maybe one could have been of something else. I think the step machine needed some WD40, but otherwise, the set and props were well sourced and well used.
Anjana Dey Clark	The set and props depicted the socio-economic levels of the world of the show very well and were sufficiently safe, practical, and functional. The scene changes are enabled by the set design and the set and props provide good visual reinforcement of the message and mood of the show. The use of props is consistent throughout the show, though some were rather cliched and predictable such as the weightlifting activity, without weights!

Costume, Hair and Makeup

Charlotte King	Costumes had attention to detail and really added to the character and tone of the show, for example the ice-cream t-shirt and the way the 'eat the rich' slogan ironically ended up on Sophie. Raven's costume was particularly effective both in building character and comedic effect.
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Emma Thomson	Each character had their own personality and that came through in the costumes. It's easier to have a more natural look in the studio, as heavy make up (apart from Raven!) would not have worked for the piece. I do feel there could have been more care taken with the reshaping of the 'larger' characters, maybe using additions to the body rather than 'stuffing'. It didn't detract from the overall piece, but is something to potentially rework in future
Jenny Wemyss	Costuming did a great job of depicting each of the characters and their personalities. The use of padding was effective and funny within the fitness journey, as were the slogan t-shirts. Hair and Make-up also conveyed the characters while remaining appropriate for the setting.
James Sidgwick	The clothing items worn were all character appropriate and well sourced. I have to say however that I thought the characters sporting some 'extra weight' looked unfortunately like they'd had a cushion shoved up their tops / down their trousers. The extra weight didn't look like a realistic paunch, so this did distract a little.
Anjana Dey Clark	The costumes, hair and make up provide excellent visual appeal, display creativity and noticable attention to detail and reflect a unified design concept that supports the director's overall vision. The costumes, hair and make up reflect nuances in characterisation such as personality traits, psychological and philosophical, health and emotional states and were clever choices i.e. Maureen's fat suit, Raven's EMO/Goth make-up and costume, and especially the appropriately sloganised t-shirts saying 'Eat The Rich'. The addition of white sparkles to the hair when they returned from the snowy outdoors is a good example of reflecting key information such as weather. The characters' outfits reflected their socio-economic status and occupations very well. For example, Sophie is smart and sophisticated whereas Mo, Jackie, Raven and Donald all reflect the working classes in their outfits. Costume changes were practical and accomplished with ease and consistent with the present time in the play e.g. the fat suits were retained throughout any changes of costume especially with Jackie.

Lighting Design

Charlotte King	Lighting cues were used effectively for both narrative purposes and to signal movement between acts.
Emma Thomson	Lighting cues worked well and were effective. The timing of the cues were well executed and I liked the different levels of black outs between scenes.
Jenny Wemyss	The lighting worked well, focusing the audiences attention. The low blue wash during the power outage was effective and all cues were executed smoothly.

James Sidgwick	For the most part everything was well lit. One scene where the focus was shifting between two separate conversations was well managed, as was the nighttime scene where Donald had to use the 'toilet'. There was one strange moment though where the lighting seemed to focus on two characters as they had a serious conversation- I didn't find this particularly necessary, and thought it would have worked better without any shift. However, that's a minor point. Some late cues left actors onstage waiting for the lighting change.
Anjana Dey Clark	There were inconsistencies in the lighting which hindered some of the attempts to create the correct mood, atmosphere or psychological effect of the show. I didn't notice any special effects but, if there were any, they were clearly unsuccessful. The erratic nature of the lighting established inappropriate focus and sometimes limited the visibility of the action on stage e.g. there were occasions when it was so dark during the action that it was difficult to focus on the actors and what they were saying. This is also true when the time of day or year being depicted was inaccurately portrayed e.g. when it was winter outside it's understandable that it would be dark inside, but not all through the day. Also, when it was meant to be evening or night-time, the lighting was either too dark to focus on the action going on or too light to be believable that it was winter-time. I didn't feel that the lighting design adequately supported the director's overall vision/concept for the production and it didn't work well enough to be effective in highlighting the other design elements, particularly displaying a lack of attention to the fluidity of the scene changes.

Sound and Projection

Charlotte King	Music and sound effects all worked well and effectively within the narrative. The music choices were obviously intentional and well suited.
Emma Thomson	Projection and diction was really well done in this show, however, there were some really funny lines that were missed on the whole due to the volume levels. When there are no mics and it relies on projection, it's important that a base level is set and then anything more emotive goes above that level, so we don't lose ends of sentences and miss out on funny jokes.
Jenny Wemyss	I enjoyed the use of music throughout the show. Song choices were appropriate and added further humour. The levels were well balanced in the space, and dialogue was clear and well projected.
James Sidgwick	All performers were clear and could be heard at all times. Music was well used between the scenes providing good context. (I'd maybe have suggested using the chorus of 'Food Glorious Food' rather than the intro, just for the people in the audience who don't know the song so well).

Anjana Dey Clark	The use of popular music tracks to establish and enhance the mood, atmosphere and psychological effect of the show were very well chosen and researched. The music choices displayed cultural/historical accuracy and supported the artistic interpretation effectively. For example, my particular favourite was the choice of the track 'Fatty' by the Smiths for the opening of the show. It was an ingenious choice as it clearly intimated what the show was about. Also, bursts of music which came from the CD player on stage related directly to the show's topic: a fat reducing club and were placed effectively throughout the show emanating from the appropriate location on stage. Overall, I thought the sound design supported the director's vision/concept for the production very well. The volume levels both in the recorded tracks and in the sound projection from the actors were very good and not overwhelming or uncomfortable for the audience.
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Overall Entertainment

Charlotte King	I thoroughly enjoyed the show and really warmed to the characters. I found myself laughing throughout and left feeling uplifted. Thank you!
Emma Thomson	I really enjoyed this production, it was a great play and achieved what it set out to do. I must mention at this point the FoH set up and team. The cakes were a nice touch with the programme and a themed raffle never goes a miss! Congratulations to Cos on a great show.
Jenny Wemyss	Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed Waiting for Gateaux. All elements were brought together nicely, to make a really funny show that had the audience laughing throughout! The cast gave strong performances and felt like a really tight knit group, which was a delight to watch. Well done COS on a great show.

James Sidgwick	It was great to see such an enjoyable, entertaining and all round successful production for Cosmopolitan Players. A funny script, well organised and well performed by a strong cast. The audience for the Saturday matinee (myself included) were belly laughing heartily at the many great deliveries of some of the excellent one-liners. One thing I do want to mention though is the artwork for this production. I must say the promotional imagery is some of the poorest I've ever seen. (I still think I'm yet to see a picture of that cake without its aspect ratio warped). The blank background with a clipped image, etc. I'm not sure I've seen an actual poster design but all the online promotion (in my opinion) served to make the show look unimpressive, which is such a shame given what a well put together production it actually was! I'm afraid I'd extend those comments to the programme as well. I'd guess it may have been made in MS Word, the word / image spacing is a bit sporadic, inconsistent font sizes, the table has a random purple line in it etc etc. I absolutely understand the challenges these things generate, but equally think they're an important part of presenting the Society, and the Network as competent providers of entertainment, and LeedsCAN can provide assistance with this stuff if needed. I completely agree that we don't have to present as, or live up to professional standards, but we also do well to avoid living up to amateur stereotypes. However, whilst I felt those points were important to make, I don't want to insinuate that they in any way detracted from my enjoyment of the production. It was funny, it was warm, the characters were loveable and well conveyed and it was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon of theatre.
Anjana Dey Clark	Overall I enjoyed the show. The production reaches what it sets out to achieve with enough strengths to outweigh its weaknesses. The production elements work together adequately to create a cohesive performance. The production adequately fulfils the requirements of the script in terms of acting, design and some technical elements. Some of the verbal gags and aphorisms worked extremely well e.g. buying trousers two sizes too big to downplay the fact that the character hadn't lost any weight at all, or not counting calories in food because it's always in food they liked and smoking being good for arthritis. Generally, the props/resources were adequately used but weren't particularly innovative in that some of the visual gags were slightly cliched. For example, the weightlifting scene where Donald was using a pole without any weights on the end, pretending to lift them and then Mo comes along and picks it up with one hand and also when Donald pees into a water bottle which the 'baddie' Sophie drinks from. This had the desired effect on the audience of making them feel sick but it's been done before. Script delivery by a couple of the actors faltered at times and the plot was a bit stop/start in places but, on the whole, the acting was charming and the story was simple to follow. For me the humour was quite mild with some laugh out loud moments and there was a lot of swearing which could offend some people, but I felt it was not out of context and worked for the genre of the show, as well as effectively establishing character motivations and status. I couldn't detect any deliberate use of a particular accent in any of the actors but I don't feel that would really matter as it wouldn't detract from the fact that the script was, for the most part, quite good.

Performance Comments

Jane Ellaway Robinson playing MAUREEN

Charlotte King	A really believable performance. Maureen's role as the 'mother hen' of the group came across really well. I really warmed to the character.
Emma Thomson	Jane played this part well. She took the audience on the journey with her, through the emotions of what the class and the people meant to her.
Jenny Wemyss	Jane did a fantastic job playing Maureen. She was so likeable, bringing out the sweet emotional side of the character, as well as giving the audience plenty of laughs all the way through! Her relationships and interactions with the other characters were lovely.
James Sidgwick	Jane's performance of Maureen was spot on - likeable, jolly, and earnest.
Anjana Dey Clark	I found Jane's acting a little mechanical and overdone. Her reactions and interactions with the other characters were a little staged and awkward and I felt she tried to pull focus by over acting for the audience. Her movements and body language was under-developed and appeared forced such as waving the fat suit bottom at the audience to make a humorous point. Jane had occasional problems with diction and delivery, having a few trips of the tongue or hesitation, though her volume was excellent. I thought Jane tried too hard to embody the absurdism style of acting chosen for the production and with a little more practice in holding back, not over doing things, she would've been more successful.

Jai Jai Ekins playing DONALD

Charlotte King	Brilliant comic timing and physical comedy throughout!
Emma Thomson	Jai Jai was phenomenal in this play. As the only male in the cast, he really held his own and played the part with such vibrancy. He was a joy to watch and I do hope that's not the last we've seen of him!
Jenny Wemyss	I found this portrayal of Donald hilarious, with brilliant facial expressions. Comic timing was great, and used only at the appropriate moments to ensure it wasn't pulling focus from the action. As well as this, there were lovely heartfelt sections of the play. The relationships with all the other characters were handled well and portrayed meaningfully.
James Sidgwick	Jai Jai was incredibly funny and loveable in the role of Donald. A sweet character with a child-like sense of fun, and Jai Jai brought all of that across to the audience excellently.

Anjana Dey Clark	I found Jai Jai's acting somewhat believable though not particularly memorable or interesting. He interacted well with the other characters though sometimes it didn't quite feel natural in that there was a bit of 'your turn, my turn' about his delivery of the script. His movement and body language was moderately appropriate to the character, though I couldn't quite get why he was at a fat reducing club when he didn't appear fat. Perhaps I missed the significance of his presence in this environment, even though it eventually became clear he wanted company and he fancied Mo. Jai Jai's volume was adequate enough to be heard, but the diction was sometimes lost. He tried to embody the absurdism style of acting chosen for the production but I think this would've been more obvious if he had worn a fat suit or had something else about him to make him a plausible character in this production. Jai Jai's singing was fine as was his ability to take on the more physical elements of his character in this story but it wasn't an outstanding performance by any means.
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Grace Harper playing JACKIE

Charlotte King	A really strong performance. You gave a real sense of the character's feisty personality and really made me dislike the husband!
Emma Thomson	Grace played Jackie with great emotion and portrayed the character well throughout.
Jenny Wemyss	Grace played a lovely Jackie with nice vocal expression! Her portrayal was bubbly and fun while also tackling the developments in the characters home life as the production progressed. Again, the relationships between the characters were well explored and made for lovely heartfelt sections in amongst the comedy.
James Sidgwick	Grace's performance was believable, serious and natural when needed, but also fierce and comical when the script required.
Anjana Dey Clark	I found Grace's performance very honest and believable. She interacted with the other characters in a natural meaningful way and didn't try to pull focus or over act unnecessarily. Grace effectively utilized movement, body language and physical nuances beyond basic blocking, especially where she was required to be sensitive and sympathetic. She incorporated vocal variety and inflection well beyond basic diction and volume. Grace skilfully embodied the melodramatic style of acting chosen for the production and her abilities were strong.

Kirsty Barnes playing WHITNEY / RAVEN

Charlotte King	A fab performance, really engaging. You did such a good job of making the character lovable despite the surly exterior, and of exploiting her sarcasm for comic effect.
Emma Thomson	Kirsty played the brooding teenager with such gumption. It definitely felt like we had an insight into 15yr old Kirsty and that played well to an audience.

Jenny Wemyss	Kirsty played the frosty Raven with plenty of attitude! Her snappy one liners and sarcasm were a different shade to the comedy throughout the piece and all well delivered. This wasn't all though, again the well formed cast relationships seemed to shine through as Kirsty performed some lovely emotional and sincere scenes with the other actors.
James Sidgwick	Kirsty's character was clear from the off - very different from the rest, but also with plenty of common ground - Kirsty got to deliver some of the best lines in the show and she savoured them snarkily.
Anjana Dey Clark	I found Kirsty's performance the best of all. It was very honest and believable and she had a strong stage presence. She interacted with the other characters in a natural meaningful way and didn't try to pull focus or over act at all. Kirsty effectively utilized movement, body language and physical nuances well beyond basic blocking. Her Goth/EMO appearance was brilliantly and effectively utilized to embody the moody, difficult youth she characterised. Kirsty incorporated vocal variety and inflection superior to basic diction and volume and she skilfully embodied the period style of acting chosen for the production. It was also evident that Kirsty had other abilities that were strong such as singing and other physical expression.

Emily Cutts playing SOPHIE

Charlotte King	You really effectively portrayed the villain of the piece, the character we love to hate!
Emma Thomson	Emily was the baddy that this piece needed. She transitioned well between the 2 'characters' and gave the audience a reason to feel for the cast even more.
Jenny Wemyss	Emily played this part really well, as the 'baddy' of the show, she still ensured the audience had plenty of laughs! She portrayed her characters' unravelling throughout the production with ease and her facial expressions and body language were wonderful.
James Sidgwick	Emily had the toughest role, being the antagonist to the other four characters. She was a strong character though and held her own confidently.
Anjana Dey Clark	I also found Emily's acting a little mechanical and overdone. Her reactions and interactions with the other characters were a little staged and awkward as well but she didn't try to pull focus by over acting for the audience. Her movements and body language were under-developed or forced in parts such as when making a point of drinking Donald's urine from her water bottle. It was as if she knew this was a sure fire way of getting an audience reaction - and it was but it was too predictable. To her credit, Emily's diction and fluency of speech were good though she could've had more volume and conviction in her voice. I thought Emily tried to hard to embody the villanous style of acting chosen for the production though whether it was totally convincing is a moot point.