

A Network Theatre Company production

at Network Theatre, Lower Road

Set Menu: Reading 28 February 2008

by Deborah Heath



Reading: 28/02/2008 19:00

The first reading of a new play...

Set Menu, as its name suggests is set in a restaurant and explores the events of one evening. The play has 9 characters but can in fact be performed by 7 actors, which would involve two sets of doubling.

Both the first and second act actually cover the same period of time in real terms but the first half explores what happens outside the restaurant, while the second reveals the interior events.

The first half focuses on the growing relationship between Caroline, who is waiting for her boyfriend but has in fact been stood up, and Lewis, who is apparently the doorman but turns out to be an Oxford graduate who is a friend of Simon, the waiter. Interspersed with their conversation we meet Callum and Georgina - out for a birthday dinner, very briefly Andy and Brie, on their way to the theatre and Ian a somewhat eccentric food critic with a penchant for after dinner mints.

The second half focuses on the relationship between Callum and Georgina. Callum reveals that he has actually bought the restaurant for Georgina as a surprise which infuriates her as he hasn't discussed it with her - not to mention that she thought he'd been having an affair! All the action happens with the backdrop of a hen party taking place in the back room from where we hear occasional bouts of noise and laughter. We also see the founder of the Hen night Siobhan now and then attempting to flirt with our fairly beleaguered waiter Simon.

The play ends with Callum in despair as Georgina has disappeared to consider whether their relationship has a future, while Lewis and Caroline coming into the restaurant for dinner - perhaps the start of a new relationship amidst the breakdown of another.