

ALBERT MAKE US LAUGH  
2007

# Big night is a royal occasion

“Today is the best: you know where you are” is young Albert’s philosophy in *Albert, Make Us Laugh*, but Jimmy Chinn’s play marked yesteryears with a production at Hampton Hill Playhouse to celebrate Teddington Theatre Club’s 80th anniversary.

An outstanding lighting design by Gary Stevenson created moods, commented on plot and hinted, within an abstract set, at various locations around a secondary school in 1950’s Lancashire. Played by adults, the new pupils assemble, scared, cocky, rebellious or nervous.

Albert has had a strange childhood. Brought up in isolation, he lacks basic social understanding.

David Brickwood drew a poignant picture of the innocence and desire to please of a little boy lost, befriended by Primrose, coquettishly played by Catherine Early, and the sickly Shane, accurately characterised by Jeremy Gill.

But Albert has to bear the brunt of

bullying from corrosive Charlie (David Dadswell) and sadistic gym-master Mr. Leatherbottle (David Wheatley).

Some of the staff recognise Albert’s innate qualities, although his spirituality alarms scripture teacher Miss Partington, precisely played by Tracy Frankson.

The bohemian Miss Mint was floridly portrayed by Alice Langrish (whose role as an English teacher was spoilt by poor pronunciation).

Janine Stride played a desperately prim Miss Hemsley, helping the befuddled but kindly headmaster (Ken Mason) confront the social issues as sordid details surface.

Humanity wins through to reveal that the protagonists are all, in their own way, searching for

love. Love personified by Albert’s mother, the taciturn uneducated Enid (Christina Graham) who lives only for her son.

Director Sally Halsey has created a gripping piece, full of moving moments and, in Albert’s word, “beautiffulness”.

Mark Aspen



**Greetings: Princess Alexandra is welcomed by Mayor of Richmond Councillor Marc Cranfield-Adams.**

Deadline HY1793-02

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# reviews



**Regal entrance:**  
Princess  
Alexandra  
arrives at  
Teddington  
Theatre Club's  
80th Anniversary  
gala  
performance of  
Albert Make  
Us Laugh on  
Saturday.  
Deadlinepix  
HY1793-03