

BAREFOOT IN THE PARK  
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# Regret that the honeymoon is actually over

Richmond Drama  
Awards

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THE honeymoon is over! And in **Barefoot in the Park** Teddington Theatre Club has dipped its toe once more into Neil Simon's incisive and well-observed comedy writing

As the honeymoon's sweetness begins to wane, Corrie wants its passion and excitement to last on. She is not put off by the six flights of stairs to their love nest under the cold (and broken) roof of a New York brownstone apartment. But for Paul Bratter, the staid young lawyer she has married, cold reality looms in the shape of tomorrow's day in court.

Karen Heyworth-Taylor, as the skittish and impetuous Corrie, brought a starry-eyed vivacity to the part, a Babycham effervescence, as Corrie comes to terms with post-honeymoon life. Ashley Munson donned the stuffed shirt, playing Paul, the young fogey, with an anxious energy.

The two made such a close pair that it seemed such a shame when wedding turned into marriage and the cracks began to show. Unfortunately, there was a tendency to race words to maintain the good American accents.

John Spencer, as the amiable Harry Pepper, the telephone repairman, was a portrait of embarrassment as he was caught in the crossfire of the newly-weds' argument. We flinched with him as the words began to fly.

Terence M Cardinal added a rubber-jointed physicality to the comedy as the eccentric Victor

Velasco, an emaciated gourmet and impoverished bon viveur, but "a thoroughly nice fellow". He teased the audience with tortured vowels and flexible accents until settling into Hungarian.

Here is an actor who uses his eyes, face and body to great comic effect. He put the same insouciant glee into embroidering his facts as into serving his knichis (an obscure delicacy made with strange piscine parts).

Clare Terry's portrayal of Ethel Banks, Corrie's straight-laced but lonely mum, skilfully balanced pathos and humour. It was with self-surprise that she discovered that she was falling for Victor. Clare is no stranger to Neil Simon having played in two earlier TTC productions, and again her well-tuned "Noo Yark" accent proved itself well.

Designer, Andy Waterworth also made a cameo appearance as the asthmatic and aged Delivery Man, not so much a "spit and a cough" but a veritable lungful of wheeze! His set of the bare apartment, its vastness accentuated by false perspective and a massive skylight, could have been scaled-down to be in keeping with the script, and may have prevented some lighting problems. However, period detail spoke 1965, right down to the plumbing and the Kelvinator fridge.

This attention to period detail continued in Julie Connery's costumes, and in the props. Pepper's telephone was a Princess phone, which (like the UK's Trimphone) was pure sixties: as was Connie Francis singing in the background, "Who's Sorry Now".

I certainly was very sorry when it came to an end and the honeymoon was over.