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STIMULATING INTRODUCTION TO PINTER
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HAROLD PINTER, England's foremost currently active playwright, marked his Nobel Prize for Literature last year with a withering attack on US foreign policy, particularly in regards to its actions in Iraq. His speech, which he delivered to the Swedish Academy via videophone because of ill-health, concluded with a cri de coeur to citizens around the world to uncover the truth of our lives, a reference to what he perceives as chicanery on the part of many Western governments.

This hankering for the purity of truth is explored in many of his plays and is the central theme of "The Collection", the longest of the four dynamic pieces currently being showcased by the English-language That Theatre Company at Krudttønden. This four hander focuses on two couples in the fashion business whose lives become intertwined over an apparent act of infidelity. Whether the deed took place at all is left deliberately unclear by the playwright, who instead dwells on the fall-out it generates.

The result being that the strange dynamics which underpin most relationships get a thorough airing. All four actors do a good job here in the most demanding piece of the evening, though a special mention must go to Tom McEwan for one of the most realistic recreations of a hangover I've seen.

Sira Stampe opens the evening with a monologue entitled "Special Offer", in which she recounts an unusual conversation with a woman who offers to procure her a man – for the right price. It's an oddly diverting piece that worked well as the preamble to the night's second offering, "Trouble in the Works".

This is enjoyable, straight-up farce, and actors Tom McEwan and Gordon Kennedy do extremely well with the machine-gun dialogue. If "Trouble in the Works" provided the light relief, the next piece, simply titled "Monologue" supplied the darker tones. Ian Burns is absolutely superb as the nameless individual pouring out his lament for lost opportunities. Seamlessly flitting from heart-rending grief to seething rage, he inhabits the character wholly and with no small amount of professionalism. It was the most impressive performance of the evening.

Under the direction of Claus Bue, That Theatre Company has delivered an artful and stimulating introduction to Pinter that deserves every success.