

## Finley Award Critique

By Neroli Sweetman

Theatre: PAANDA

Production: Spring Storm

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

This was my first visit to PAANDA and I was very impressed with the performance venue. The setting for this production was very well done with the decorated archway in Act two making the outdoor scene more realistic. A clever use of the stage. My only concerns were the length of time for some scene changes even whilst understanding the limitations by having a completely open working area. Lighting was complimentary to the production and the props and furniture set the era. I particularly liked the costume choices, with the ladies of the cast looking very elegant – shoes and hats adding that touch of realism and the gentlemen looking dapper and stylish in their outfits.

I had not seen this show previously but had been a fan of Tennessee Williams plays for quite some time. A very wordy script which the cast handled extremely well with the pace, interaction and characterisation commendable. My congratulations to Courtney McManus for her casting of this production.

Ella Gorringe and Matthew Jones played their roles with conviction and Ella handled the emotions of the script in a convincing manner. Tennessee Buti also played a believable Dick Miles while Astrid Dainton as Hertha gave a commendable performance when her character breaks down as she tries to come to terms with losing her chance to win Arthur.

Supporting roles of Lila, Oliver and Bridie were all consistent throughout the play, as were the remainder of the ensemble cast. Their interaction with each other and the natural reactions to situations that transpired was very good. I would like to make mention of Abbey Morris (Esmerelda), whilst she maintained her character and played it well I felt that her looks were more like Heavenly's Sister than her Mother. I feel she could have been made to look older by clothing style and makeup.

Although there was a small audience in attendance, they showed the appreciation of the production by their applause and I congratulate all involved in the show for an enjoyable night of theatre. I look forward to seeing more shows at PAANDA in the future.

My thanks for allowing me to see this show.

*Neroli Sweetman*