

THE COCKTAIL HOUR

**Adelaide Repertory Theatre
Arts Theatre**

Review by Theresa Dolman

The Cocktail Hour, directed by Kerrin White, is a study of a family. Each evening, the parents keep up the family tradition of relaxing together for an hour - the cocktail hour - while the maid prepares dinner.

This particular evening is special because son John is coming to visit. But the evening is disrupted when John, a part-time playwright, asks the family for permission to produce his latest work---a play based on the family. His parents, without even reading the play, are horrified, certain that the play will show them in a bad light, and the father offers John money to abandon the production. His sister, on the other hand, is offended because she plays only a minor role.

During the evening, it becomes apparent that John's perceptions of his family are more accurate than any of them would like to admit; but he also discovers that he has some important misconceptions that he will need to readdress.

Tony Busch gave a wonderful performance as John, bringing out the tension which has obviously been building between himself and the family for years. Michael Croome was first-class as the traditional father, not ready to compromise his life and ideals for what he considers to be a "whim" of his second-favourite son.

Rhonda Grill also does well as John's mother, Ann, keen on the odd tippie and trying desperately to hang on to family traditions, especially that of the cocktail hour. The cast is topped off nicely with Linda Davey as John's sister Nina, who, after having spent her life pleasing other people, decides that it is now time to please herself.

The set was opulent and well dressed, with the cocktail bar taking centre stage. The grand piano was also a nice touch, and it was good to see John tinkering on it rather than having it totally ignored. The costumes were good, but John's wig was a little too obvious.

Overall, a good drama with some lighter moments.