

Going Postal by Unseen Theatre Company: Wait A Minute, Mr Postman! ~ Review



[THEATRE ~ SA]

The Bakehouse Theatre, Thu 21 Nov.



A full house waits expectantly on the opening night of Unseen Theatre Company's latest production, an adaptation for the stage of Sir Terry Pratchett's comedic novel, *Going Postal*. Unseen have presented well over 20 productions of Pratchett's work in the last 19 years. Here they do a solid job with the tale of conman and swindler, Moist von Lipwig, sentenced to reform and revitalise the moribund Ankh-Morpork postal service, or else. Throw in golems, corruption, tyranny, a romantic interest, surprising moments of physical comedy and plenty of belly-laughs, and fans of Sir Terry will be well-pleased with this performance. Be warned though, it's a long night at around two-and-a-half hours.

Director Pamela Munt, founder and artistic director of Unseen Theatre Company, takes on *Going Postal* for a second time (following an earlier outing in 2005). She deftly manages a big cast on a small stage, while staying true to the spirit and scope of Sir Terry's comedy. The cast, for the most part, lean into the broad characterisations and deadpan delivery beloved by Pratchett fans, and some standout moments draw raucous laughter from the friendly crowd.



Danny Sag as the fantastically ruthless Lord Vetinari steals every scene that he is in. Paul Messenger nails his role as the sinister villain Reacher Gilt, the head of the price-fixing, infrastructure-looting, worker-sacking, competitor-murdering business cabal that have taken over the Grand Trunk Company, much to the detriment of Ankh-Morpork's long-suffering citizens.

Nicholas Andrews, as main character Moist, plays the role with flamboyant energy and well-timed asides – lighting changes are used effectively to convey the moments he breaks the fourth wall and addresses the audience directly. But there is a thin line between charming and smarmy, and Moist sometimes comes across as unsympathetic, at times when he could have been making the audience fall for his spiel.

New performer Adam Thorstenson shows fabulous range in two very different roles, and their attention-to-detail in costuming was noted. Kahlia Tutty plays heroine Adora Belle Dearheart with seriously sarcastic ferocity, and Hugh O'Connor does a handy job with long-serving Junior Postman, Tolliver Groat – a nuanced performance that left the audience feeling very warm and friendly towards this loyal servant of the Post.



Sam Tutty's stamp-spotter Stanley Howler is another very charming portrayal of a young postal worker whose enthusiasms frequently run away with him. Natalie Haigh, as golem Mr Pump, transcended the limitations of her costume to provide a sympathetic perspective on the life of a conscious tool with no free will. The actors playing smaller parts demonstrated an impressive array of characterisations across varied roles, and Alastair Preece's vocal range was a highlight.



From a production perspective, the cast made the most of the small space, with set changes happening relatively smoothly to create different locations, and sound and lighting effects used cleverly to build atmosphere. The one exception would be a back and forth conversation between Moist and a recording of a female voice, in which the background crackle on the audio was loud enough to be distracting as the audio stopped and started. Musical interludes covering scene changes were witty and relevant, and the audience couldn't help but tap their feet along to Sousa's *The Liberty Bell* march.

As with all Unseen Theatre Company productions, the love and respect shown for the source material was palpable and Pratchett fans will enjoy this as a night out.



4 stars

Jordan Bell -Clothesline

***Going Postal* continues at The Bakehouse Theatre – Main Theatre, from 8pm until Sat 30 Nov. Book at bakehousetheatre.com.au. Click [HERE](#) to purchase your tickets.**

Images courtesy of Michael Errey

