

THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF MR PICKWICK

Bakehouse Theatre

Until 01 Mar 2014

Review by [Linda Edwards](#)

"The Trials and Tribulations" of Mr Pickwick is a delight from start to finish, and you do not need to have any prior knowledge of the book on which the characters are based, "The Pickwick Papers", the first novel Charles Dickens wrote, to thoroughly enjoy this show. With any luck, it might even send you off to the library to borrow the book to learn more about the characters and situations they get themselves into.

British actor Nigel Nevinson created the hour-long show by selecting some of the gems of scenes from Dickens's novel, and featuring some of its most delightful characters. In the one-hander, Nevinson plays Mr Pickwick as well as all the other characters, and the audience follows Pickwick as he bumbles from one hilarious situation to another, winding up in prison for breaching a promise of marriage he didn't even know he had made and refusing to pay the fine.

Like the book on which it is based, the play is set in the early nineteenth century, and this is made clear through the period costume and simple devices such as sound effects of trotting horses.

The script is funny, warm, and clever, and Nevinson handles the material with great confidence and charm, varying his voice, mannerisms and delivery for the different characters convincingly. Among the most endearing of the characters are Pickwick's manservant Sam Weller, landlady Mrs Bardell, her young son, and the trial judge and lawyers. Each is instantly recognisable once introduced, and each has captured the essence of believable eccentricity.

The set is very simple (as it has to be in a confined, intimate space such as the Bakehouse Studio) but effective, and Nevinson uses the few props well, finding comedy even in pieces such as a hat stand and lawyer's wig.

There was one blackout that seemed to slow the action down a little on the opening night, and the stage at the Studio must be one of the creakiest in Adelaide, but that did not detract at all from what is an exceptionally good play performed brilliantly.

Rating: 4 stars (out of 5)