

# GOING POSTAL – BROADWAY WORLD REVIEW

Reviewed by Christine Pyman Thursday 21st November 2019.



This is, at heart, a story of beings and their foibles, and the results of innate goodness and cleverness that are bought to the fore with pressure. You will see what I mean when you go to see this production, which you really should do.

Being a Sir **Terry Pratchett** tale, it is all wrapped up in an exuberant amount of wit and humour, tied with a bow of parables of our times.

**Going Postal** was one of the later books in the Discworld series, and seems to reflect a slightly darker and more cynical view, perfectly realised, of course, and presented in a way to subvert everyday bureaucracies whilst laughing at them.

There's a delicious ironic pleasure to be had to come to understand that, even while you are enjoying watching a comedic play, ostensibly about criminal activities, you are the ones creating this rich vein of society that's being mined and re-presented for our entertainment. Darkness and laughter mix intoxicatingly well.

The main character of Moist von Lipwig, wonderfully brought to life in front of us by Nicholas Andrews, is an endearing one and, obviously, Pratchett felt the same way about this creation as he was bought back as the main character in two more novels. Von Lipwig is a cunning conman who is almost as good at understanding people's behaviour as the tyrant, Lord Vetinari, and together they make a controlling team, changing the society of the not-so-good people of Ankh Morpork.

Andrews made the perfect von Lipwig, with spot-on timing, gestures, and confidence. In fact, this entire production was well cast, with each of the actors bringing enthusiasm and fun to their multitudinous roles.

Danny Sag brings experience to his role of Vetinari, who, with a drawl and a dismissive turn of his head simultaneously manages to give the audience delight, anticipation and a tinge of horror at his machinations. Sag's performance was well foiled by Alastair Preece's Drumknott, played with just the right amount of disinterested disdain to add a layer of background character to the mainly benevolent dictator Vetinari.

Unseen veteran, Paul Messenger, made an effective leader of a corporation which irresistibly reminded me of our electricity companies, with privatisation and profit-making on the agenda. His cohorts showed us what we all suspect is the actual inner workings of big businesses.

The setting of the Post Office also held aside the veils to expose the innate ridiculousness and depths of bureaucracy, with the possibly Benny Hill inspired capering of **Sam Tutty** and **Hugh O'Connor**. This was tempered by the beautiful moments of supernatural despair held within the building, exposed to us through lighting and sound.

There were so many outstanding moments in these two acts that I want to leave as lovely nuggets of pleasurable surprise for the next audience, but I must mention a particularly clever piece of direction that Pratchett fans will revel quietly in. Newcomer to Unseen, Nikonus Pappus, had the honour, and spent the effort of getting right, a one-liner that closed a joke that runs rampant throughout Pratchett's writing. Perfect. I'll say no more.

Unseen Theatre Company, for those that don't already know, is the brilliant brainchild of Pamela Munt, director, actor, and chief whip-holder. It is obvious that everyone in Unseen Theatre Company is there because of sheer love, for the theatre, Pratchett, fun, each other. Their achievements are proportional to this. To present a story that has multiple characters, intertwined storylines, which is set in an entire city and its surrounds, which would require a huge budget to realise as a film, and to make this effectively and brilliantly is an ambitious undertaking. Unseen has achieved this. Director Pamela Munt is to be applauded for her vision and task-making, and her perspicacity in gathering a talented bunch of people around her. Costumes, set design, production, photography, and everything that goes into making a successful production shine, Pamela has gotten the best from her people. Stephen Dean's clever lighting and sound design are of special note, taking a good, fun production to a higher level.

Photography, Michael Errey