**Acting**

*This is a challenging two-hander that calls for some subtle acting from the cast. The actor playing Rachel gave a strong performance that demonstrated an intelligent awareness of the play’s sub-text. Her initial thinking-on-her-feet as she creates the Health and |Safety role for Purvis was skilfully conveyed as were her sense of helplessness at such actions of Purvis as dumping the flowers in the bin. She built the character well from her barely suppressed frustration through to near hysteria and then dawning realisation . There was a clear sense of the effect that the offstage Edward has on her life and this led to some strong moments such as the awkward communication of Edward’s message and her delivery of the truth about Purvis – particularly effective was her attempt to retract this, a key indicator of this character’s desire to avoid unpleasant truths. Her body language – flapping hand gestures, fluttering and half-finished actions – consistently conveyed character.*

*The character of Purvis could come over as a clumsy clown but the actor playing this role gave a more nuanced performance avoiding overdoing the slapstick elements of the play and conveying something of the character’s rather sad insecurities. The actor developed the character effectively as Purvis’s confidence in his new role as well as his officiousness grows. Above all, the character’s innocence about the mayhem he causes and the earnestness with which he misses the point were nicely conveyed. His latter realisation of the truth about both himself and Rachel was poignant.*

*Watch timing with the lines over the audience laughter on occasion, and while generally the picking up of cues, etc. gave the dialogue an impressive pace, perhaps the opening exchanges could be slowed down somewhat.*

**Direction**

*There were many effective aspects of the direction. The dialogue was well orchestrated with some nice timing of the comedy lines – e.g. “He’s my husband”, “I don’t drive”, “It’s for communion”. Above all, the dialogue had that difficult to achieve effect of sounding like natural conversation with characters, for example, stepping on one another’s lines. The organ loft duologue was particularly strong. The stiffly awkward body language on the characters was another well realised feature. The comedic set-pieces were well choregraphed – the vase business and Purvis’s routing to accompany hymns, and there were some clever touches in the business – the hat/handshake awkwardness at the beginning and Rachel adjusting Purvis’s jacket near the end. The characters were generally moved well around the acting space – I liked the signalling of Rachel’s defeat by Purvis’s lack of understanding in the movement at one point. Perhaps the two characters were a little static in the centre stage area in the first scene. The shift in tone in the last scene was well handled.*

**Stage Presentation**

*Curtain music set the scene well and the vestry setting was strongly conveyed with its initial clutter becoming more marked as Purvis’s malign influence develops. Set dressing and furniture added to the authenticity – e.g. the chairs and the convincingly busy notice board. Properties like the suitably ridiculous large safety notice, the floral display and Rachel’s thumb bandage were used to good comic effect. Costumes aided characterisation – Rachel’s floral dress, Purvis’s overall and flat cap.*

**General Achievement**

*A skilful cast realised much of the play’s comedy without losing sight of it’s more touching aspects.*

***Bruce David Adams - Adjudicator***

**MARKS**

**Acting** 33/40 **Direction** 32/35

**Stage Presentation** 12/15 **General Achievement** 8/10 **Total Marks** 85/100



**One Act Play Festival**

**ADJUDICATOR’S MARK SHEET**

**Moray Firth District**

**Team – Buccaneer Theatre**

**Play – Purvis by Nick Warburton**

**At – Florians Theatre, Inverness on Friday 22 February 2013**