Lovers: Winners and Losers

This play, ‘Lovers’, by Brian Friel, is a double bill, in two distinct parts. First comes ’Winners’ and after the interval ‘Losers’ follows.

**Winners: The Set.**

The set is minimal but extremely dramatic. Two chairs are set, one to the right and one to the left of the front of the stage on a highly polished floor. At the start of the play a brown diamond-shaped platform appears suspended in mid air. It is higher than 10 feet above the ground. Its edges are defined by a blue light and sitting on the platform are two green cuboids, one large one to the left and one small one to the right. These cuboids appear solid but are actually hollow.

When the stage lights come up the platform is supported by the bare, spreading branches of two, large leafless trees. Behind the trees, beneath the platform, is a dark wall, which could be a rocky outcrop.

**Winners: The Cast**

The Man and the Woman are narrators of the tale and sit on the chairs set on either side of the stage throughout the action. They are I shadow for the action of the play and can hardly be discerned. They are dressed identically in dark trousers and a dark sweater with a diamond shaped pattern. The man is bearded with grey hair and beard, with a square face. The woman has an oval shaped face and is well-padded. The man is played by Charlie Bonner, the woman by Abigail Mc Gibbon.

Mag is a slight youthful figure with long blonde hair, kept off her face with a hair slide, wide eyes, a heart shaped face and full mouth. She is dressed in school uniform. She wears a plaid pleated skirt in brown and red with just touches her knees. A kilt pin fastens the skirt at the front. With it she wears, a beige jumper and a white shirt. Her uniform is completed with brown knee length socks and brown T bar shoes. In the course of the play we learn that she is 17 years old. The part of Mag is played by Ruby Campbell.

Joe has a tall slim figure boyish figure with dark curly hair and intense dark eyes over which he wears dark rimmed glasses, a firm mouth and an oval face. He is also in school uniform, wearing long grey trousers and a grey blazer. He has a blue shirt and a blue and grey striped tie. Joe is played by Thomas Finnegan.

**Losers**

After the interval the set is transformed. The high platform becomes an upstairs bedroom, with the cubes coming together to make a bed which is covered in a pink candlewick bedspread and has 3 heaped up pillows at its head. An old-fashioned handled ‘school’ bell sits on the bed near the pillows. A chair stands at the head of the bed, on the left. At the point of the diamond-shaped platform nearest the audience, there is a shrine composed of the statue of a saint, candles and an offering of flowers. A light shines on the shrine. Beneath the platform, which is no longer supported by trees but by two steel pillars, is the living room, with a parquet floor, a small brown sofa on the right of the stage with a small chair next to the sofa on its left. A small low stool sits on the left of the stage away from the sitting room and a pair of binoculars rests on the stool.

**The Cast of Losers**

Andy has a square face with a wide mouth and narrow blue eyes. He has short grizzled hair and a neat beard. He is tall and well-built but not fat and seems to be in his early fifties. He wears an overcoat with a soft grey cap on his head. Beneath the coat he has a navy blue jacket and blue pullover, a grey shirt and maroon tie, with brown trousers and shoes. Later he appears in a brown chunky-knit cardigan. This part is played by Charlie Bonner, who also takes the role of the male narrator in the Winners play.

Hanna is played by Abigail McGibbon, who is the other narrator in Winners. She has straggly blonde hair, a chubby face, wide blue eyes and a small mouth. She is large and cuddly but not tall. She wears a shapeless, mid calf length, gathered red skirt, with a similarly unglamorous, loose pale blue jumper and black shoes. Later in the play she appears in a cream Aran cardigan over her skirt.

Mrs Wilson, Hanna’s mother, lies in the bed upstairs for most of the play. She has white fluffy hair, wide set eyes and a large mouth. Her figure is slender and frail-looking. She wears a white nightie and a quilted dressing gown, black trimmed with red and pale, thick bed socks. Round her neck she sports a shiny medal. Helena Bereen plays this part.

Cissy is played by Carol Moore. Slender to the point of skinniness, she has a round face, small features and permed, iron grey, hair. She first appears in a brown, buttoned up cardigan, with a white blouse under and a grey pleated skirt. The ensemble is completed with sensible, brown, flat shoes. She carries a set of rosary beads. Later she arrives in a grey coat with a brown fur collar, and she carries a grey handbag.

Lovers, Winners and Losers, was directed by Emma Jordan and set and lighting design was by Ciaran Bagnall with costumes by Enda Kenny.