

### Arts Review 2010 - the year on stage and screen

1:00pm Friday 31st December 2010

- [By Rick Bowen »](#)

AFTER an indifferent 2009, there was plenty to get excited about on the amateur and professional stage this year.

Altrincham Garrick's Lauriston Studio continues to live up to its ethos of staging cutting edge and challenging theatre. The highlights being Bryony Lavery's chilling exploration of a paedophile's psyche in *Frozen* and *The Pillowman*, an equally disturbing masterpiece from Martin McDonagh.

In the main house, David Haig's *My Boy Jack* broke more than a few hearts and offered us a salutary reminder, if any were needed, of the tragedy of war.

McDonagh provided me with another of the year's highlights when the Club Theatre staged a memorable production of his brilliant black comedy, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. *Separate Tables*, staged by the society in November, certainly made the most of a beautifully observed and often poignant piece of writing.

In terms of musicals, Trafford Margaretians charmed us with *Half A Sixpence* in the Spring and Sale and Altrincham Musical Theatre proved that Chess really is the only game in town. A difficult score was well and truly conquered by the company.

Professionally, Trafford's Feelgood Theatre Productions returned with a stunning production of *Slave - A Question of Freedom*. Staged at The Lowry in November, it told the heartbreaking and inspiring story of Mende Nazer, a Sudanese woman sold into slavery as a child. The Royal Exchange's *Dr Faustus* was equally unforgettable and I hope to see more of Marlowe's plays performed in Manchester in the not too distant future.

On the big screen, the highlights included the feel good flick *Made In Dagenham*, about a group of female car plant workers fighting for equal pay and the latest Harry Potter outing, *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows Part 1*. But my absolute favourite, a little gem of a film, was *Due Date*, in which Robert Downey Jnr and Zach Galifianakis play the archetypal odd couple forced to share a car on what turns out to be the road trip from hell. As hilarious as this movie is, it also has a big heart

The Best of 2010 - The Amateurs Best Play: *Separate Tables* by Terence Rattigan, The Club Theatre, November.

Best Actor: Barry Hall, Ralph, Frozen by Bryony Lavery, Lauriston Studio, April.

Best Actress: Pam Nolan, Carrie Kipling, My Boy Jack by David Haig, Altrincham Garrick, November.

Best Comedy: The Beauty Queen of Leenane by Martin McDonagh, The Club Theatre, March.

Best Director: Celia Bonner, The Pillowman by Martin McDonagh, Lauriston Studio, September.

Best Musical: Half A Sixpence by David Heneker, Trafford Margaretians, March.

Best Actor In A Musical: Jeff Harpin, Anatoly, Chess by Sir Tim Rice, Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus, Sale and Altrincham Musical Theatre, October.

Best Actress In A Musical: Sarah Kirk, Sarah Brown, Guys and Dolls by Frank Loesser, Trafford Margaretians, November.

The Professionals Best Play: Slave: A Question of Freedom, Feelgood Theatre Productions, November.

Best Actor: Bob Golding, Eric Morecambe, Morecambe by Tim Withnall, The Lowry, October.

Best Actress: Lashana Lynch, Mende Nazer, Slave: A Question of Freedom adapted by Caroline Clegg and Kevin Fegan, Feelgood Theatre Productions, November.

Best Comedy: Charley's Aunt by Brandon Thomas, Royal Exchange Theatre, June.

Best Director: Caroline Clegg, Slave: A Question of Freedom, Feelgood Theatre, November.

Best Musical: Spamalot by Eric Idle and John du Prez, Palace Theatre, July.