

Posted by: Gavin Kalin on the 29 September 2010

**YES, PRIME MINISTER ★ ★ ★ ★**

Having transferred from Chichester Festival Theatre, [Yes Prime Minister](#) is now gracing London's Theatreland at the [Gielgud Theatre](#). And what grace! Having had a record-breaking run this production keeps its original cast members, Henry Goodman as Sir Humphrey Appleby and David Haig as Prime Minister Jim Hacker.

The writers of the classic TV series *Yes, Minister* and [Yes, Prime Minister](#), Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn have reunited for this anniversary production and they have not lost their comedy genius. Being *just about* too young to remember the series, this reviewer wishes she had seen some of their work before seeing last night's press night at the [Gielgud Theatre](#). A TV sitcom that was applauded for its satire has grown its theatrical wings and embraced farce- what other road could a play about British politics take?

We find PM Jim Hacker in a quandary at Chequers- his minority government is imploding, and an economic breakdown is imminent without the help of a trillion dollar offer from a country in Central Asia. An offer which, of course, comes at a price... Relationships with other European countries would be compromised if things aren't straightened out, but core Democratic, Western beliefs are ignored if the request is met. The plot quickly moves from sedate to frantic as more and more problems are piled onto our passionate yet largely incapable Prime Minister who resorts to prayer and playing the media to keep his seat of power.

Henry Goodman's Sir Humphrey is delicious; His apparently obsequious manner creates a smooth platter on which David Haig can dish out his perfectly manic PM on the brink. His monologues of perfected jargon are delivered in one breath, and yet he says just as much with a timely raise of his eyebrows.

Haig plays the part of the dependent leader with immense energy, and relishes some of the best lines in the piece with his envious comic delivery: "I don't know what else I don't know, do *you* know?" he asks his aides, Special Advisor Claire Sutton and Principal Private Secretary Bernard Woolley, well-played by Emily Joyce and Jonathan Slinger. There is a whiff of Basil Fawlty about his performance, but that is no bad thing in this plot.

With current politics the way they are, this couldn't have been produced at a better time, and the targets for the comedy darts are there for the taking. The Euro/Sterling argument, newly formed governments, relationships with the BBC, illegal immigrants and the political trump card- Global Warming.

As well as co-writing, Lynn directed, and he doesn't disappoint his audience. It's a landslide victory!

By Anna Tringham

[http://www.totallytheatre.com/theatre\\_reviews/yes\\_prime\\_minister\\_9733\\_9733\\_9733\\_9733](http://www.totallytheatre.com/theatre_reviews/yes_prime_minister_9733_9733_9733_9733)