



Show Report

SOUP Productions

Under The Iron Clock

17 April 2026

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Under The Iron Clock
SOCIETY	SOUP Productions
VENUE	St Thomas' Church Hall
GENRE	Drama
CAST SIZE	11
DIRECTOR	Joshua Gosney
SET DESIGN TEAM	Andrew Gosney, Ruth Gosney, Joshua Gosney, Michelle Drinkwater, Colin Drinkwater, Emmett Drinkwater
CHOREOGRAPHER	Janine Roberts
ASSISTANT CASTING DIRECTOR	Jennifer Woodward
THEATRE SOUND TECHNICIAN	Martin Pollard
SOUND, LIGHT AND PROJECTION DESIGNER	Joshua Gosney
PRODUCTION/THEATRE PHOTOGRAPHER	Colin Drinkwater (Jorube Portrait Photography)
PROMOTIONAL VIDEO DESIGNER/EDITOR	Samantha-Jane Twigg, Joshua Gosney
THEATRICAL MARKUP ARTIST	Lily Roberts
PROGRAM DESIGNER	Joshua Gosney
CHAIR/ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR	Michael Pirks
SECRETARY	Sam Duxbury
PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR	Ruth Gosney
COMMITTEE SUPPORT/MERCHANDISING	Jayne Dittrich
SOCIAL MEDIA	Samantha-Jane Twigg
HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBER	Simon Choat

CAST LIST

The Clerk	Neil Atherton
Fat Cat & Sloan	Andrew Kenny
The Boy & Sibling 2	Emmett Drinkwater
The Manager & Sloane	Sam Duxbury
The Dessert	Michael Pirks
The Wife & Sloane	Ruth Gosney
The Duchess	Jayne Dittrich
The Waiter & Sloane's Sister	Barbara Hebde
Sloane & The Main	Lisa Rhodes
The Grandma & Sloane	Michelle Drinkwater

The Poor & The Starter Janine Roberts

DATE OF PERFORMANCE Friday 17th April 2026

DATE REPORT PUBLISHED Sunday 19th April 2026

ADJUDICATOR ID NSA0002

NSA LOGO ON POSTER No

NSA IN PROGRAMME Logo only on rear, No Banner

PROGRAMME CLASS Best Original Design

THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT 1896

STRONGEST ELEMENTS

Janine Roberts - The Poor/The Starter

- Janine gave a strong and impressive performance throughout the production with great immersivity. Her Monologue towards the end of Act Two was memorable and stylised in her delivery.

Scene Three - The Snowy Forest

- This Scene was a collaborative effort from all parts of the production, to take the audience on the journey with The Clerk through his time of desperation, but through clever use of stylisation, Lighting sound and overall theatrical performance.

Cohesive Society

- This society has a strong, cohesive identity, with every member of the cast and crew showing genuine passion for their work. Everyone I spoke to demonstrated a clear sense of teamwork, consistently supporting one another.

What a great opportunity it was to attend Soup Production's premier production of 'Under The Iron Clock', written and directed by **Joshua Gosney**. On arrival at the venue, we were greeted by Josh, who set the scene for the extraordinary events that were about to unfold. The production's mise-en-scène was immediately apparent upon entering the auditorium, reflecting a strong influence of German Expressionism—one of Josh's key areas of focus during his university studies and a major source of inspiration for the show. This transformed us into a 1980's abstract piece of theatre, which at times provided a vociferous vision to the production. Josh's vision and rustic approach was evident; the audience were positioned either side of a

central raised platform leading up to the apron with a piano stage left that through artistic interpretation was used as an initial focal point for opening the show.

Upstage there was PVC frosted sheet used as the backdrop with a white warm glow, portraying shadows from hands pressing against the sheet, creating a sense of discomfort for the audience from the offset. Around the room eighties hits were subtly playing as if coming through a wireless radio sat on the apron. Throughout the production, the stage design remained deliberately minimal, featuring a chaise longue, PVC frosted screens, a piano, and a carefully limited selection of additional props. These elements were used to their full advantage in each scene, with the cast facilitating scene changes throughout the performance and even during the interval. This approach created a more immersive experience, allowing the audience to feel continuously engaged in the world of the production.

As the production started, we were introduced to the cast, **Neil Atherton** playing the lead role of the 'The Clerk.' Neil gave a performance using great physicality throughout, and delivered strong vocals throughout his performance. The emotive energy Neil portrayed created substance to the portrayal of a working man desperate to make a better life for himself and others. His performance remained consistent throughout and the characterisation was strong throughout his delivery. There are moments where I felt, in parts I wanted a little more from Neil's facial expressions to coincide with the play's avant-garde movement. However, this didn't detract from his overall performance. One of the key moments in the production which both my guest and I enjoyed was Scene Three, 'The Snowy Forest,' Neil's despair during the monologue in this scene held the audience on every word, symbolic gestures resonated throughout the piece such as the removal of his cuff links essentially releasing the chains restricting him to everyday life.

Andrew Kenny's opening role of Fat Cat established us in the bank creating a comedic atmosphere alongside **Sam Duxbury** who portrayed The Manager of the bank. Andrew's timing, character and wit was cleverly intertwined throughout the scene along with his physicality in facial expressions reacting to the ongoing events unfolding. At times it was difficult to hear Andrew's lines in the scene as occasionally his diction and projection dipped. However, this was rectified in his second role of the Greyhound Announcer - Sloane. This role was delivered with confidence, character and an overall sense of finesse to the role. He controlled the audience and cast during his time on stage and was a figurehead for the Sloanes as a whole.

Sam Duxbury, gave a clear and strong performance across all roles performed. As The Manager of the bank, she clearly commanded the establishment and scene, with character oozing from every word. Role after role she gave a strong performance. Every time she stepped on stage my eyes were drawn to her characterisation within each role. She did not detract from the scene but rather enhanced the overall journey we as an audience undertook. During her Sloane performances she gave picturesque detail in her facial expressions giving clear methodology behind every choice, styling each character suitably.

The Boy, played by **Emmet Drinkwater**, embodied the youth of 1980s society, variously representing an inheritor, a son, and the next generation. Emmet's vocals were clear, with crisp diction throughout, lending credibility to each role. As the Manager's son, they offered a perspective rooted in the experience of a typical child of the era, at times present yet largely unheard. It was lovely to see live music brought into the scene by Emmet for the clerks home, there was a nervous disposition when Emmet was on stage alone, but this lifted when supported by other members of the cast. This was evident in the Greyhound scene where as worker for the Sloanes, alongside their fellow cast, Emmet shone through, delivering confidence and projection. With further experience and development opportunities Emmet is one to watch for the future.

A queer lens into the time was through the character of The Desert played by **Michael Pirks**, who is also the Chair and Associate Director of Soup. It was welcoming to see such a topic raised within the production, especially in such a stylised performance similar to that of a 1980's music video. Michael gave a strong and confident performance in every scene he was in, showcasing an unapologetic campness with the character – a true eighties drag queen. A compelling moment was during scene seven, the pink flamingo club, where until the very end of her life in the brothel, The Dessert was a clear play on sexuality and the sexualisation of these performers/workers, and Micheal performed this with determination and commitment.

Whilst the production was described as "weird and queer", I felt that at times the performance shied away from a pressing LGBTQIA+ topic: the grittiness of a queer performer's life – to display the misfortune and fear that 'The Dessert' became due to the hands of The Clerk, this would have been great to see; especially when inspired by Germanic expressionism.

Ruth Gosney played the role of the wife and Sloane, she displayed these characters with a clear delivery, good diction and clear definitions on genre change throughout the performance. She engaged well with other performers including Michelle Drinkwater when playing the role of Grandma during Scene four in The Clerks Home. Michelle brought an elegance of comedy to the role, without large amounts of dialogue she was able to entice the audience into the scene and create moments of great comedic timing, her facial expressions were a mixture of flat effect which complemented other emotions taking place in the scene, to highly animated expressions for key points of her dialogue. This was apparent throughout the performance resulting in a tele-novella-style summary of the scene.

There was a great use of tonality and clear distress in body language displayed by **Jayne Dittrich** playing The Duchess. She brought a touch of vibrancy to the stage along with great characterisation, even though she was grieving. She delivered a convincing accent in line with the character.

Barbara Hebden portrayed The Waiter and Dessert's Sister stood out during the pink Flamingo Club, her control and dominance over the other cast was clear, with good stage presence, clear diction and delivery of her dialogue. It would have been nice to see more emotion from

the death of her sister, through the use of mannerisms and facial expressions, but I understand this a difficult emotion to portray, which I don't feel is out of her skill set. It would be nice to see further opportunities for developments in character in future performances.

The Main a confident and vibrant role was played by **Lisa Rhodes** who also played a Sloane. She delivered her roles with confidence and determination, adding value to the core points of each scene. She was great with her facial expressions, understanding and reaction to other characters around her and had a sense of vulnerability when asked to reveal her true self whilst playing The main. This was evident though her change in tone and body language during the scene. She delivered the roles well and gave pace to pace the storyline.

Janine Roberts delivered a strong and memorable performance, taking on roles including The Poor and The Starter. Her delivery of character was of a high standard with passion and control through each role she performed. She put effort and characterisation into each and every role, with great immersivity during the interval and throughout Act Two. Her monologue towards the end of Act Two was powerful with key moments where she commanded the stage bringing the story to its conclusion. She appeared to be the symbol of fate always around always looming and finally taking hold even after everything The Clerk had been subject to.

Standout moments throughout the performance included The Snowy Forest, where the simplistic use of shadow, minimal lighting, shredded paper as snow, and the cast physically shaping the stage to form a path of choice for The Clerk combined to create a powerful sense of tension, loss, fear, and emotional trauma. At moments throughout Neil's monologue lighting designed by Josh was cleverly stripped back, adding symbolic references to juxtapositions of poor and rich, loss and hope, which emphasised the key moments throughout the scene.

Lighting throughout the production was minimalistic but used effectively, based on the fact this produced on a minimalistic budget, its clever use and control gave additional key moments and pace to the show. The significant use of colour used throughout the whole production was during the pink flamingo scene which added further depth to the scene. While light bleed between areas is not typically complementary in most productions, here the effect—combined with the shadows cast by the tube lighting—contributed to a persistent sense of unease for the audience throughout the performance.

Another effective use of physicalisation occurred during the greyhound scene, where cast positioning and lighting conveyed the sense of an ongoing race at Belle Vue Greyhound Stadium. By utilising the central raised stage and combining movement with shadow, the ensemble created the impression of a large-scale crowd.

Sound designed by Josh and operated by **Martin Pollard**, gave an extensive range of emotions and feelings throughout the performance, from upbeat 1980's pop hits to cinematic ambient sound effects. While this complemented the performance, there were some issues with microphone timing and intermittent frequency faults that caused occasional dropouts. As I

attended on opening night, these may well have been resolved in subsequent performances. However, they did not detract from the cast's work, who remained consistently professional throughout.

A Prominent line from the show that stood out to me was, "In the beginning we enter this world with nothing, and leave with nothing." This summarises the show as a whole for myself, I entered the space with very little knowledge of what I was about to see and watch. Both me and my guest walked away with a multitude of thoughts and feelings from the production, that we can't take with us when we're gone. Therefore, sharing these moments of inspiration and interpretation feels important in the present moment. I hope Josh and the entire team feel a strong sense of pride in what they have achieved, and that others are able to experience Josh's work and the world that has been created. Theatre of this nature, in such a raw expressionist form, is increasingly rare.

Congratulations to everyone involved. I would like to thank Josh and those who I spoke to from the society and wish you all the best for your next production.

PHOTOGRAPHS







PROGRAMME

