

Shirley Valentine - hilarious

Review By Cynthia Daly

The scene opens in the kitchen of Heaven Under The Moon, a cultural centre on the Awhitu Pe-

ninsula, where a somewhat dowdy dressed woman is pouring herself a glass of wine.

Shirley Valentine,

played by Nancy Schroder, begins to speak to the audience as though she is speaking to an individual person, sitting at

her table sharing a cup of tea.

Gradually between the humour, as she talks about converting to wine from rum and coke, her son's performance as Joseph in a nativity play, sex, her husband, Joe and life on this side of the wall, you begin to realise, this is the image of a woman who has lost her sense of self.

As she cooks up the eggs and chips for Joe's tea, Shirley wonders openly how she has ended up this way where she no longer wants to venture beyond the walls of her home. The walls have become her friends and she talks intermittently to the wall is the kitchen asking its opinion, "Do you remember Wall...?"

"I used to be so rebellious. I wore my school uniform so short it looked like a serviette around my neck, can you believe that Wall?"

We all laugh at her experiences but it is hard not to be touched by them.

Once we have the full picture of this lost soul; Shirley pulls from her bag a ticket to Greece given to her by her friend Jane.

Jane has had the awful experience of finding her husband in bed with the milkman and is off to Greece for a holiday to

recover. Shirley is invited as a travelling companion but will she go?

How can she tell Joe? Who will look after him and cook his meals?

Shirley decides to take the plunge and heads off to Greece without telling Joe, after arranging for her mother to defrost the dinners she has prepared for him.

We transfer to the ballroom for the second act of the play.

Shirley has arrived in Greece and her re-awakening is beginning. We see Shirley unravelling to the person she should be. Apart from making friends with Rock on the beach, who she talks to but who doesn't reply because it's a Greek rock and doesn't understand her language, Shirley is a completely new character.

The play closes with the good news that Joe is coming to Greece to make up with his new Shirley and things will never be the same again for the both of them.

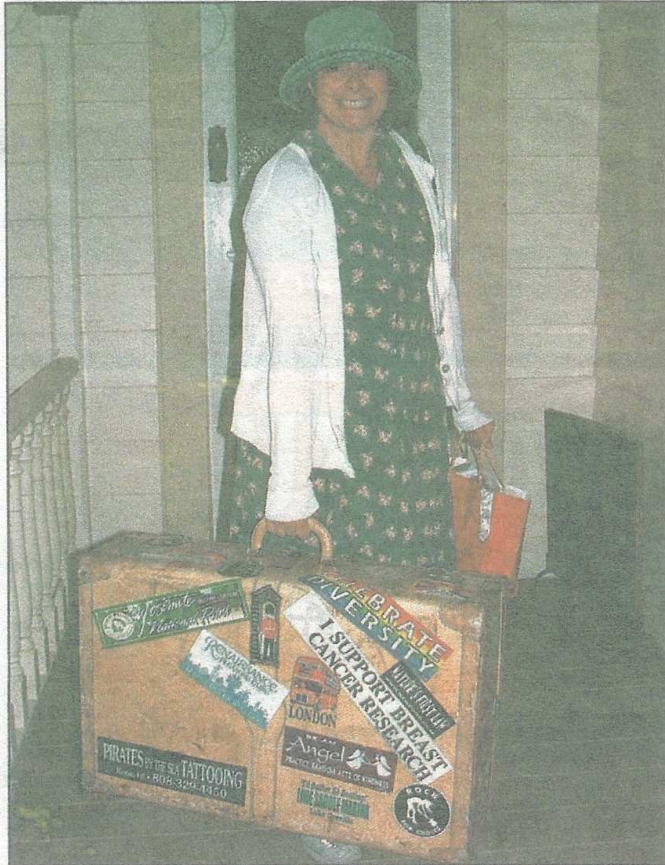
The movie, *Shirley Valentine* came out some years ago. I had seen it and thought it brilliant but I was unsure how the story would come across as a one-woman play.

Within five minutes of Nancy Schroder's opening performance I was living *Shirley Valentine* and totally hooked into the storyline.

I marvelled at Nancy's expressions, her confident grasp of the different accents, complete with emotion, from broad English to sexy Greek.

Nancy had me sympathising with Shirley's life, celebrating her re-awakening and at the end of the play, hoping Shirley would live happily ever after.

I recommend Nancy Schroder's performance of *Shirley Valentine* to anyone who wants to be totally entertained by someone who has exceptional talent. Thanks Nancy you were brilliant.



Nancy Schroder as Shirley Valentine at Heaven Under The Moon.