

## A RESPECTABLE FUNERAL - Joy Scherer

*These records have been adapted from the programme notes of the play performed as part of the "SECRETS" short plays production of 2017.*

"A Respectable Funeral" by Jimmie Chinn was first performed by the Semi-Circle in January 1987. It was directed by Muriel Taylor, a founder member of the club, who had directed their very first one-act play in 1986. For several years our one-act plays were defined as workshops, with the aim of giving less experienced members greater opportunity to perform on stage, or learn new jobs behind the scenes, and from these productions grew our evenings of one-act plays.

Rehearsals for "A Respectable Funeral" took place at Muriel and Bryan's flat, the venue was the Rekizet (Church Hall) in Ettingen and the invited audience were members of the British Circle. The cast members were Doreen Richter, Joy Scherer, Graham Simons and Diana Zuger. The stage was small, the set was simple but suitably furnished, mainly with items loaned by Muriel, to create the required cluttered living-room effect.

The play was well received, and a further performance was held, this time in Muriel and Bryan's living-room which, with ingenuity, they temporarily converted into a small, cosy theatre with space for some 20 spectators. It was a successful venture and in response to popular demand two more performances were held there, again for invited audiences.

Over the next few weeks, the cast were invited to perform the play for the Barfüsserclub, and then for the International Club.

In 1988 they performed at the Lange Erlen Park as part of the English-Speaking Club's 25th anniversary celebrations. On all three occasions they had to make do with a very basic set and at Lange Erlen, in the open air and amid a variety of background noises (including goods trains rolling over a nearby bridge), voice projection proved a challenge.

These performances were also sketched by Cornelia Ziegler and the drawings can be viewed on the "Cornelia Zeigler" page of the website.

The play was then resurrected in September 1991 when it was chosen as the Semi-Circle's entry at the 3rd Festival of English-Speaking Theatre in Switzerland, held that year in Geneva. So, it was time to brush up on the lines once more. For that performance Joan Kuster took over the role of Joyce, previously played by Doreen Richter who sadly passed away earlier in the year. The cast were delighted to be able to perform the play on a "real" stage at last and received kind words from the adjudicator.

There fell the final curtain on "A Respectable Funeral" ... or so it was thought. However, the play was revived many years later in 2017 and two of the original cast members were involved - Diana Zuger, who played Evadne, now directed, and Joy Scherer reprised her role as Greta. With this return of the play the Semi-Circle paid tribute to Muriel Taylor and to her outstanding contribution to the club in its early years. Muriel passed away in 2015.