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John Radley  
The Starburst Theatre Company  
1 Felixstowe Close  
Lower Earley  
Reading  
RG6 3UF

24/04/2005

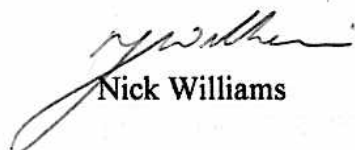
Dear John

Very many thanks to you and the Starburst Company for your kind invitation to the show last night and making me so very welcome.

To stage a show is hard enough but to include supper for the audience makes for so much more work. The whole company and all their helpers / relatives are to be congratulated on both a fine show and good food. Both, I know, from the comments made to me were so well received.

Please find enclosed copy of review for The Starburst Theatre Company performance on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2005

Yours sincerely

  
Nick Williams

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Dinner theatre is a hard act to pull off for an experienced company. To get it right so nearly at your first attempt is exceptional. The Starburst Theatre Company's decision to present *Babysitting Calvin and Nobody Sleeps* in this format was both brave and well presented.

In *Babysitting Calvin*, Pete Woodford as Calvin and Phil Turton as Bob provided strong leads and both their physical acting and timing was good. The ladies providing support stepped up to parts with gusto but were overshadowed on occasion by the two leads. Mention must be made of James Kingham and Ian Robertson's directing whose deft hand wove a story which the audience found very funny.

To open a second half (after a good supper) with Chekhov may seem a trifle ambitious but Andy Grant's exposition of *'The evils of tobacco'* was delivered with feeling and skill. He did not quite grasp all of the nuances within this multilayered piece but for sheer bravado of seizing the stage and the attention of the audience he deserves much credit.

The final piece *Nobody Sleeps* suffered from the fact that it did not match the standard of the previous two pieces and may have done better opening the evening. That is not to say that there were not performances of note from Shaun Garret and newcomer Caz Robertson but this is a short piece that needs a cadence and timing in the delivery of dialogue which was not quite reached when the whole ensemble was interacting.

The staging was kept simple with no attempt at the multi-doors approach beloved of farce producers. The company can take great pride from their first 'straight' play and use the experience to further their artistic development

**Nick Williams**  
**Region 4A**  
**NODA**