

Babooshka deservedly a sell-out

**Babooshka
The Playhouse
Timaru**

The national premiere of Kiki Kendrick's drama with a difference took place in The Playhouse on Saturday evening to a packed and appreciative audience.

The concept of having five women playing the part of one at different ages, all seeking self-esteem, is not new, but to have them appear together, and in a fashion boutique with the audience as the mirror, frequently just in their lingerie (as perhaps a natural link with the pre-performance fashion show

of outerwear?), certainly gave a modern and at times truly New Zealand twist to the format.

Director Carol Angland has once again drawn the best from her cast, and while the spare set and lighting were realistically provided, the costuming, literally off the rack mostly, took the prize for originality — along with Kate Bush's haunting background song and the voice-overs given by John Fitzsimons and Jane Coughlan.

Aided by choreographer Alison Gray and assistant director Clair Leistra, Ms Angland had her image-

conscious cast synchronise their development and intricate movements beautifully in what gives new meaning to the idea of intimate theatre.

Katrina Goodger, a newcomer to the SCDL ranks, gave a highly convincing version of a young, pert and careless salesgirl (her "We've only got what's out' grew increasingly meaningful!).

Diana Steven brought out the best of the ultra-chic second age Anna with boyfriend woes while Erin Kirkwood personified the recent mother despairingly trying to fit her enlarged

frame into appropriate figure-reducing dresses.

Raewyn Guise just about rocked her socks and everything else off in her not so inner pre-divorce turmoil, and Pat Bartholomew as Anna 5, literally on her way to a mission, presented the finally accepting version of women who really see the inner self as more important than the outer display — just as the Russian babuschka dolls do.

Babooshka is deservedly sold-out, with such impressive and ultimately tasteful performances. Well done, Drama League.

— Gordon Prowse