

Heckington Players May 2022

Dying Out Loud, 3 comedy tales with a twist.

A fabulous evening's entertainment! An interesting, thought-provoking, and atmospheric trio of one act plays with different actors and directors incorporating talent from Heckington Players.

Ledge, Ledger and the Legend by Paul Elliot. Is at first glance a darkly comic look at suicide. Not a common theme, but expertly handled by director Callum Thomas. Peter, dressed inexplicably as a hotdog, climbs out onto a ledge to end his life. Callum Thursby as Peter gave a determined performance. The set designed by Callum Thomas and Tamara Mills, was simple, yet effective. The ledge became the stadium of the drama. By the end Peter has been confronted by two potential supporters in his quest to end his life, who in turn argue, postulate and try to influence Peter's experience. David O'Brien gave a good performance as JM but Laura Griffin excelled as PJ. (I hope I got that the write was round). Laura's confident acting enriched the dialogue and action. Both JM and PJ shuffled around Peter and his ledge, offering to teach Peter the correct way to go about a jump suicide. The bizarrely comic tale was well performed and had the audience trying to analyse the meaning during the interval, which I think is often a good sign of good writing.

Next, we were treated to a Kei Bailey special. If you like Inside Number 9, or tales with a twist, you will enjoy Done & Dusted. Michelle, Judy and Pauline gather to help their friend Emma get over the death of her husband. Judy and Michelle (Caroline Johnson and Jenni Chamberlain), share a friendship which is long standing and if not equal, equally enjoyed. Along comes Pauline (Collette Buchanan-Gray), who we first think is joining the group to support Amy. But her opinionated behaviour seems at odds with Judy and Paulines's more gentle support. The dialogue, action and looks between them draw the audience in and we start to understand more is going on than is first evident. Some very funny moments but as the story unfolds, we realise Pauline will not do well in this friendship circle. Indeed, she is drugged by a delicious carrot cake and her end is clearly signposted by a large knife being handed to Amy. Such an interesting and dark tale, of witchcraft and women hood. I felt it touched elegantly on the effect of bereavement and grief on

individuals, and how well-meaning advice is not always welcome, yet neither is indulging in the whims of the exhausted overawed mind. Well written and directed by Kei and excellent performances from the players.

Finally, we were treated to Murder in Little Grimley by David Tristram. The 4th episode from Little Grimley I think and very well written and performed. Our usual members of the Little Grimley Players are the director/writer Gordon (David O'Brien), the Ditsy Joyce, (Kelly Anderson), a daft as a brush but well-meaning Bernard (Stuart Wyle) and the prima donna and limelight stealing Margaret (Melanie Priestley) are joined by Sam (Amy Ash). A clever, witty, crime story, with mishaps and misdirection well performed with great chemistry and comic timing. My only small criticism is the long pauses for scene changes, it seemed that the music was more important than the story and we had to endure the whole piece before action could commence.

I must say the lighting and sound (Mark Elsom, Callum Thursby, Nathan Hughes) were well designed and managed, which all came together with hair and make-up by Katie Calo and set design by Callum Thomas and Tamara Mills to create a great evening of entertainment. We were extended a warm welcome by the front of house team, Keith Baggley and Kei Bailey plus Tamara Mills (Bar Manager) also deserves a mention. Thank you and well done all.