
ENCORE TO MURDER

Blackwood Players

Mayfair Theatre

Until March 19

Review by Andy Ahrens

A late start and an apology in advance for any technical mishaps was an unfortunate entrée to Blackwood Player's change of venue into the Mayfair Theatre.

Sadly, when the curtain was raised the pace of the night didn't rise with it. The biggest mystery about this murder was why director Allen Puttock didn't inject some pace and intention into it. 'Encore to Murder' was largely unexciting and uninspired.

The play was saved by good casting and most actors at least seemed comfortable in their respective roles. David Lockwood as 'Chief Inspector McEvoy' provided a matured calmness in his role. Justin Kelly provided appropriate flair and flamboyance in the over-the-top role of 'Roger St Ives'. His costume was suitably colourful.

Colleen McCormish as 'Jennifer Rooney' failed to show enough contrast and emotion in her role. This was particularly obvious in the scene where she received news about the death of her best friend.

Toby Dobson as 'Constable Larry Parker' managed on a few occasions to provide the comedy the role was written to provide. Matthew Braid in the role of 'David Loring' missed some opportunities in what was otherwise a well balanced performance. Stuart Gowdy as 'Jack Dunbar' delivered his lines too slowly and appeared stuck on the couch for much of the performance.

The set was appropriate and paid good attention to detail despite the lighting casting a shadow across it. In a show of many sound effects, credit must go to the sound and props personnel who got them all working, on time, on opening night.

'Encore to Murder' was not ready for opening night. This was probably due to technical difficulties the Company had in moving to a new venue. It will certainly quicken its pace as the season progresses. It was just unfortunate that on opening night the most memorable aspect of the production was the pleasantness of the Front of House Staff.