

BOVINGDON PLAYERS "BY WAY OF MURDER"

Writer & Director: Mark Waghorn

Bovingdon Memorial Hall 21st – 24th March 2012

A new play, written by Mark Waghorn, which had a good story, and was well-acted in the main.

The set was excellent, very well-constructed – the only thing I would have changed was the setting of the sofa, which seemed too central.

I liked Jean Fiori's portrayal of Lady Sarah, she got lots of emotion and characterisation in to her part, which was very true to life.

Barbara Bonney was a very dour Scottish housekeeper, and I enjoyed her performance. She has a very mobile face and gave us some very good facial expressions which were often more telling than the words!

Robert Peacock and Imogen Roberts as the scheming couple, Jack and Janie Summers, created a good pairing and both got a good contrast to the slightly softer Lady Sarah. Robert got the changes to his character well, from the almost subservient half-brother to the scheming money-grabbing, or rather tiara-grabbing, person.

I liked the sharpness Imogen gave to her portrayal – again a good portrayal, and lovely costumes – very suitable to who she was supposed to.

The story was intriguing, with plenty of twists and turns as a good thriller should have, but there were too many long silences whilst characters poured drinks, etc – the action needed to be moved on and covered by dialogue, as it detracted from the flow of the action. Dialogue pace was mostly good throughout from the cast.

Iain King was the commanding Detective Superintendent Beveridge – a good part for him, which he attacked well, and added pace and interest – also some play on his surname by the housekeeper at one stage – which created another amusing moment.

Michael Swietochowski was Detective Inspector Frank Curtis, who seemed to have another life which was hinted at occasionally, and turned out to be Janie's lover, and the two of them were plotting behind Jack's back to outdo him and steal the tiara themselves, and make a new life in South America.

Ben Hooker gave us a different character as Bob from Wigan – supposedly the bodyguard for the family – but who got shot early on. I liked the accent!

The shootings were very contrived, but at least there was no chance that anyone would miss the shots, and gave us due warning so that we didn't jump out of our skins. The appearance of the very tall Jonathan Anthony was a chilling end to the scene!

Laura Moore was very much the bright young thing, as Lynne Cramer, also after the tiara. I thought she 'died' very well, her being strangled, and the subsequent rather bungled disposal of the body was very funny, and the part where she was laid on the sofa and wrapped in the throw was also highly amusing.

So all in all a good play, acted well, with nice set and costumes – I enjoyed it very much, but found I had to keep my wits about me to avoid getting lost with the twists and turns of the plot, which was good.