

LEEDS CIVIC ARTS GUILD--- PRODUCTIONS

Production: Murder by The Book
11th September 2007

Society: Leeds Children's Theatre
Adjudicator: Mary Martin

Lighting		Projection of dialogue	
Costumes		Acting/Presentation	
Props/Scenery		Singing	
Make up		Entertainment value	
Sound Effects/Orchestra		Overall Production	

Total		Percentage	
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Outstanding Performance	
Best Supporting Actor	

What a very intriguing play, with more twists and turns than a mountain pass! It was extremely well handled by both Director and cast, and made for a good evening's entertainment.

The lighting was well done, with differing times of day clearly portrayed. I liked the backcloth of the photograph of the buildings, where the lights appeared in the windows at dusk. There was a 'blip' when the set went dark during the action, but that was soon remedied, and the cast carried on as though nothing had happened, well done!

The costumes were entirely right for the cast, fitted well, and with a good splash of colour for Imogen's 1st entrance.

The set was simple (very necessary in the studio) but the big difficulty here is 'sight lines'. I was at the back of the auditorium where I could neither see the settee, nor any of the action on it. So I missed what happened just before the interval- (I gathered from the gasps from some of the audience that Selwyn appeared from behind the settee). It is a difficult space to use from this point of view-maybe the settee would have been better placed further back or even put on a ross. The doors were quite well placed, but perhaps should have opened onstage, or covered with back drapes, so that we could not see Selwyn fumbling in a cupboard for a bottle-this did not quite work.

This was a very strong cast, with good contrast between the characters, and we could hear every word.

Andrew Plygawko as Selwyn, gave a very strong performance, and was totally believable as a devious writer, testing his theories on his newest plot. (Andrew does need to work on and refine his hand movements a lot more though! It is a mistake to waft hands around, they need to be much more definite in their use, perhaps a special workshop?)

He was ably supported by Helena Willcocks as Imogen, Heather Siddle as Christine, Mathew Driver as John, and Mathew Stirk as Peter. All of whom were extremely well fitted to their roles and had obviously worked hard on their characters all of which were suitably devious, and made for a highly entertaining evening with a superb twist at the end! Ruth and Michael have done a great job with this play, and it deserves to be seen again some time soon. Lets have more of it!