

The Ladykillers

Enville Street Dramatic Society

Date	18 November 2017
Venue	Amblecote Holy Trinity Church Hall
Type of production	Drama
Director	Martin Francis
Review	Andy Brown for Dennis Price

I was delighted to be invited for the first time to Enville Street Dramatic Society during the year they were celebrating their 70th birthday. My congratulations to you for this milestone.

The Ladykillers was originally a 1955 film from the Ealing Studios starring Alex Guinness, Cecil Parker and Peter Sellers. The stage play tells the story of Mrs. Wilberforce who lives in a lopsided house near Kings Cross station. She is in frequent discussion with the local police due to her rather active imagination and her suspicions about the people living close by. Along comes Professor Marcus wanting to rent a room.

Having seen different interpretations of The Ladykillers before I was interested in how the society would manage to stage this play and I was not to be disappointed. The cast consists of six main characters plus two smaller ones and some 'extras'. The team worked well together which was vital when in a confined space.

With such a strong cast it is difficult to highlight everyone however I especially liked the performance of Mark Wilcox as One-Round. New to the society he was superb for the role in size and acting. His delivery of lines such as "I'm Mister Lawson" and the announcement from the outside the front door 'Is anyone back from the robbery?' were very funny.

There were good characterisations from the remaining cast. Carey Esthop was suitably eccentric as Mrs Wilberforce busy making tea for everyone whilst wanting to ensure she did the right thing. David Lavender was convincing as the mastermind of the operation ably supported by Lee Morgan-Salcombe as Harry Robinson and Tom Dallaway as Louis Harvey the Romanian with a dislike for old ladies.

The set was well designed. Not allowing the audience to see the stairs was a clever move as it covered the fact that it could have only been a couple of steps. There was clever use upstairs to again disguise the fact there was no landing. I was not however so convinced about the use of a side door as the front door was more fitting for the arrival of the policeman and the ladies.

As most of the action takes place in either the downstairs living areas or a bedroom the cast members need to be aware of what is taking place elsewhere as well as ensure the time going from one part to the other is right. Their timing was well executed and therefore clearly well-rehearsed. here was some clever use of the stage and hall space.

The lighting for such a small stage was effective with suitable lighting on either part or the entire stage. Sound effects were equally well presented. Changes to the set were done in a timely way.

I read with interest in the programme about Neville Mole one of the original members of the society going back to 1947. Neville is reported to still be connected with the society along with several members of his family some of whom were involved in The Ladykillers. I am sure the original members would be delighted with the knowledge the society is going strong 70 years later and producing quality drama.

Well done to all at Enville Street Dramatic Society especially to Martin Francis who not only directed the play but also gave a strong performance as Major Courtney especially when dancing with Mrs Wilberforce's yellow dress.

Thank you for the welcome extended by all working front of house. Although this was my first visit I hope it was not my last.

Andy Brown for Dennis Price.