

**“Murder at Hogwarts” (A Harry Potter murder mystery). Bakehouse Theatre, Adelaide.
Season 8th June- 27th July 2017, weekly.**

I have always been a fan of improv theatre, having spent much of my youth playing theatresports, but combine this with Harry Potter and you've got to be on a winner.

Each week the *Scriptease* group from *Improv Adelaide* create a completely unscripted one hour show based on clues and roles that even they themselves do not know until the show begins. Despite being possibly a scenario for chaos, these six talented performers are experts at the craft and cleverly weave a very watchable performance virtually from thin air. The show which I saw was called *Murder at Hogwarts*, but they are also performing many other scenarios.

Aided only by a bare stage and a few pertinent props and basic costumes, each cast member is given a character, place and weapon and we, the audience, are taken on a journey, somewhat rivalling the ups and downs of a Quidditch match, to assist in solving the 'whodunnit'. Audience members are provided with a 'cluedo-style' chart on which they can eliminate weapons, rooms etc to eventually assist in solving the crime. My only criticism would be that it is very difficult to read these in a dark audience.



On the night we attended, Kirsty Wigg was the detective, in the form of Luna Lovegood, who guided us through the madcap scenes with a perfectly placed accent and manner. The victim on the night was to be Minerva McGonagall. The other cast members - Jarrad Parker (McGonagall), Marshal Cowan (Hermione Grainger), Curtis Shipley (Draco Malfoy), Elja Parsons (Harry Potter) and Claire Bottrall (Ron Weasley) - slid effortlessly into their character roles with physicality and accents which were spot on for their characters. Pace was constantly maintained and scene changes were seamless. The audience were very engaged, laughing and following along with the spontaneous quips and silliness.

Whilst all cast members were excellent, two stood out for this reviewer. Jarrad Parker showed himself to be extremely versatile and consistent with a Scottish accent and his body movements for a man of his rather tall stature. He actually had me convinced he was Maggie Smith! The other excellent performance came from Curtis Shipley. A talent to keep an eye out for, his Draco was brooding and at times hilarious, and he also showed great intuition in assisting with vocalisations and sound effects in other scenes - very clever.

This is a most entertaining one hour show, adeptly brought to its final murderous end, almost exactly on the hour. The audience, as the originators of the time frame and setting for the show, are almost the 'directors' of this piece. The actors are to be congratulated on their ability to maintain focus and think on their feet for a solid hour. They certainly gave their audience of happy muggles a good time!

Shelley Hampton