



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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THE MOUSETRAP

**Therry Dramatic Society
Arts Theatre**

Until 17 Sept 2011

Review by Richard Flynn

1975 was special for me, as it was then that I had my first trip to the UK. In the catalogue of the twenty-two shows over three weeks I saw in London, Stratford-upon-Avon and Cambridge, there was one in the West End that had been running since 1952. Excuse me? Twenty-three years? So guess what!

Thirty-six years later, Agatha Christie's arguably best known, though nowhere near best play, is still running in London. It is now also playing right here in Adelaide, for a mere handful of performances by the Therry Dramatic Society. Business has never been better!

While the name alone is attracting excellent sales, the play needs actors to tackle it as serious and believable, performed in an authentic-looking and workable English manor (designed by Nick Spottiswoode) with the snow machine outside working overtime, and sensitive lighting (by Denise Lovick). And to hold it all together, a director like Norm Caddick, a master of tone and pace - and a feel for the period (in which he grew up!) and its acting styles so nurtured in the heyday of English repertory theatre.

We are first introduced to a young couple, married for just a year, Mollie (Alicia Zorkovic) and husband Giles (Stephen Bills). They are about to open an English guest house with absolutely no clues as to where they should begin. It figures. It's Christie! It is left to Act 2 to give Zorkovic and Bills the better vehicle for their talents. There, they simply crackle.

Stir in a string of unlikely guests who just "happen" to want to savour the quiet life of a manor house which none have ever heard of, like Oliver de Rohan (enigmatic young man, Christopher Wren, who is sometimes mature, at other times gawky, and at still other times like effete Wildean youth), add sour and frumpy Mrs Boyle (the wonderful Lindy LeCornu) and beat thoroughly to a thick cream consistency with a generous dollop of Major Metcalf (a commanding Nigel Starck), chilly (not the hot variety!) Miss Casewell (Allison Scharber) and sprinkle with nuts like Mr Paravicini (Philip Lineton playing stock Philip Lineton).

The surprise of the night is Lee Cook who shows his versatility as Detective Sergeant Trotter (no plodder and not your usual dumb detective so scorned by later lay sleuths like Hercule Poirot or Miss Marples).

This production of "The Mousetrap" is a well-crafted mixture and all eight cast members hit their marks most of the time.

There are moments, however, when the play drags noticeably but that is more to do with the writing than in its playing. When that happens there is always the costumes and the various bits and pieces that dress the set or are worn or carried by the actors to admire. At Therry, these always receive as much attention as all the other facets of a rounded production.

Happy 68th Birthday, Therry! May you live longer than the uninterrupted run of "The Mousetrap" in London.