



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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THE MISTER MISTY MYSTERY

Venture Theatre Company

Trinity Uniting Hall

Until 3 Aug 2019

Review by Anthony Vawser

A caper comedy which doesn't actually depict the caper? That's the unusual situation that "The Mister Misty Mystery" presents its audience with – but can the planning and the aftermath instead provide all the substance necessary for a worthwhile theatre experience? Mostly, yes.

As we are introduced to the characters of Abbey (Lucy Marshallsay) and Jess (Emma Kinlock) in the opening scene, their devious plan starts to become clear. Both performers keep their characterisations understated, which increases the intrigue, but the moderate volume level also has the tendency to limit the dramatic impact.

The introduction of third character, Suzie, kicks the spectacle up a gear, but threatens to tip things into absurdity, since her wig is so gaudy and excessive that it combines with her wacky wardrobe choices and weirdo personality to make the character virtually into someone from another planet. Fortunately, the more that Kristy Mundy lets us get to know this woman, the more believable and endearing she seems.

A fourth member of the heist team turns out to be the absolute cherry-on-the-cake of this production; as adorably portrayed by Lorren Gartland, 'Little' Eva provides a virtually non-stop string of delightful comic reactions that go a considerable way towards buoying "The Mister Misty Mystery" when it begins to sag.

To divulge any character details about the remaining cast members would potentially spoil some of the surprise, so suffice it to say that Luke Wagner's well-spoken and magnetic performance provides a valuable injection of electricity to the second act, while David Christie brings a fun comedic edge to his scenes through an amusingly gangly physicality. Kim Stewart is quietly menacing in her best moments, though she seems to have been directed to deliver some of her longer dialogue scenes in too static a fashion.

The opening set has been attractively designed with an interesting colour scheme, but the layout in act two includes a sheet of silver foil that reflects light to a seriously distracting extent. Incidental music is well-selected to enhance the feeling of light-hearted mystery.

Ultimately, despite some wobbly elements – including a climax that feels flat and too talky – director Nicolle Smith has cooked up an entertaining show that put a smile on this reviewer's face.