

Huntingdon Drama Club: "A Fete Worse Than Death" by Richard James
Director: Michael Black

Performed in the Commemoration Hall, 7.30 Thursday 29th March 2012

The very professional Front of House Team, lead by John Morgan and Tony Burrin, welcomed us into the foyer and auditorium, which was kitted out with various stalls and games that would be usual at the average village fete, all good fun, and certainly set the mood for what was about to follow. The one set stage was the interior of a fete tent, decorated with bunting and a couple of chairs and tables for props, with the addition of some well made marrows by Ann Monk, this was all managed comfortably by Peter Walsh and his crew. The lighting and sound by Mel Pugsley, assisted by Michael Linford, was fairly basic but well designed and operated, I particularly liked the effect of the open air public address system. Kirsty Pickering and Kelly Mason did a good job of the hair and makeup.

The play starts with the initial setup of the characters involved in either competing in the village's vegetable and jams competitions, or as organiser and celebrity guest. Towards the end of act 1, a murder is discovered, and prior to the arrival of the local constabulary, two amateur sleuths spring into action, so as to solve the crime. This was a very well written play by Richard James in true Agatha Christie style, that managed to keep you guessing all the way through. Excellently Directed by Michael Black, there were no blackouts or scene changes or even passages of time, as all the action takes place in real time. Phil Green was the pompous Malcolm, who is convinced he has grown the biggest marrow, that is until he see's the results of his rival Father Mikes labours, played by Bob Pugh. It transpires that Kirsty Pickering, as Malcolm's attractive wife Bunny, is having an affair with the local historical battle re-enactor, Nigel, played with good comic timing by Dean Laccohee. The part of Ray Martin, the celebrity actor who has been commissioned to open the fete, was in the capable hands of Scott Hutchinson, who has a great way of putting the audience at ease whilst delivering a sound performance. Kelly Mason as Trish the fete organiser who is unhappy with her lot, was equally reassuring and performed confidently. The spinster of the parish, Miss Parmenter, who fancies herself as a bit of a Miss Marple was splendidly played by Jeanette Brown, who coped extremely well unravelling the complex plot lines, with the aid of the fictional television detective, Inspector Brady.

This was an excellent play, well performed by all concerned.

Don McKay
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