

BLODS

'Deathtrap' by Ira Levin

BLODS Hall Bexhill

Friday 6th October 2023

Director: Simon Meeson

Asst Director: Amber Ablitt

I was kindly warned that I could spill my drink at some point during the proceedings in fright! That didn't fortunately happen but I did unexpectedly grab my neighbour's leg in reaction. The team had certainly done their job. As the title suggests and from the front cover of Maisie Weston's blood red programme this was to be a murderous evening out. With a very warm welcome from members, kind hospitality and a raffle on entry the audience reached their seats via the set when we entered a rather elegant wood panelled room for pending deaths and intrigue. 'Deathtrap' written in 1978 by Ira Levin is a complex comedy thriller with 5 characters. Washed up script writer Sidney Bruhl who hasn't had a hit in 18 years and his wife Myra. Clifford a past student who is working on a script that guarantees success perhaps a collaboration? – could Sidney just murder him and claim the script as his own? He does or at least we thought so but 'tis a ploy that basically frightens Myra to death and Sidney turns his feelings to Clifford – this is a pre-planned setup we didn't expect. Neighbour eccentric psychic Helga ten Dorp arrives to warn of pending pain, so many twists, a storm brewing and unexpected turns. The final character is lawyer Porter Milgrim and after the gruesome demise of the three could they benefit?

Some very funny moments well-acted and directed, convincing business created in a terrific atmospheric immersive venue. Tim Kendrick portrayed Sidney Bruhl who had perfected his fast delivery expressive Connecticut accent with an ability to be plausible, using amazing eye movements to become quite menacing during copious amounts of script. Myra, unsuspecting dutiful wife supporting Sidney financially for so long – a challenging role that Sharon Gordon took on to a high standard, becoming a nervous lady frequently aided by the decanter. Sorry for her demise, but it was most convincing. Clifford Anderson arrived by train with no script copies is just an admiring ex-student, or was he? played athletically by Luke Morphew who we thought had been garrotted to death, dragged outside and duly buried. A worthy physical performance with gruesome further death scenes to follow. Adding comedy was Gabriela Zake as wackily dressed – just loved the purple boots – psychic Helga ten Dorp using her perfect exaggerated Eastern European accent. Her first role performed with much confidence she strutted the set having seen visions of murderous events with wild eye staring and agile finger movements. Together with David Allen also enjoying his debut role as business like dubious lawyer Porter Milgrim did they see benefits to these recent events? All perfectly attired by the costume department too.

Certainly, a sitting on the edge of your chair performance and not a chance of us guessing the storyline or outcome. The working space was brilliantly devised and transformed in order to use the existing staircase. The usual entrance became curtained French windows, the staircase

led upstairs to the bedrooms and bloody violent action, the usual sound desk the fireplace, an amazing array of tortures weapons, handcuffs, pistols, an axe, crossbow and more hung upon the wooden panelled walls together with framed play successes and exit door as the front door, using the central aisle leading to other areas of the house. Huge attention was paid to the dressing of the room with an elegant leather topped desk with lamp, telephone, typewriters facing the audience later turned to accommodate both Sidney and Clifford's Smith Corona longways so one could actually see business with both sets of drawers, a leather Chesterfield, wooden desk chairs and the side a library of books and a drinks cabinet with glasses and decanter which was well used. This wonderful idea was conceived by Director Simon assisted by Amber Ablitt with Mike Neeson on the set build. To complete the atmosphere, sound and lighting effects were highly professional and once again BLODS gave a first rate totally immersive theatrical experience.

Thanks once again, cast and creative team, to all those involved behind the scenes, for your hospitality, delight in meeting younger members who are learning theatrical ropes and your enthusiasm for future projects.

This report will be posted on the NODA SE website very shortly.

Anne Lawson

NODA Regional Representative

SE District 3

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

Tel 01733 374 790 Fax 01733 237 286 Email info@noda.org.uk Web www.noda.org.uk

Twitter @NODAtweets Facebook NationalOperaticDramaticAssociation

Registered CIO charity number 1171216 Registered company number 241572 Registered in England and Wales at the above address.

Patrons: **The Lord Lloyd Webber and Connie Fisher**