

Sherlockian Theatrical Society



A non-Judgmental Play Appreciation Society

Number 44

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"Holmes - Poirot"

By Jeffery Hatcher & Steve Hendrickson
St. Paul, Minnesota

Late in October, as the spooky season approached, intrepid Uncritic #010 once again ventured to the exotic northland of Minnesota for another Sherlockian theatrical experience. The world premiere of "Holmes / Poirot," by Jeffrey Hatcher and Steve Hendrickson, took place in the Park Square Theatre in downtown St. Paul, in the historic Hamm building. The versatile stage set, by designer Erik Paulsen, allowed for quick changes between disparate settings with only a few prop movements, while some innovative lighting by Kurt Jung helped the audience keep up with the location changes.

Many Sherlockian plays, notably the ever-popular "Baskerville," feature a small cast playing multiple roles. This production had a slight variation on that theme. The structure of the play involves two acts - the first taking place in the Victorian era, the second several decades later in the Jazz Age. Holmes investigates a murder in the first act, and for reasons of friendship is unable to present a satisfying solution. Years later, Agatha Christie's iconic detective Hercule Poirot picks up the thread thanks to a second

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October 9th - November 3rd

(apparent) murder that turns out to be ingeniously linked to the first. Thus, each actor plays a single character in the first act, then becomes another, seemingly unrelated character, in the second act.

Thanks to this setup, the actors playing the main characters get to essentially swap roles between brilliant detective and bumbling sidekick. In Act I, Steve Hendrickson plays Holmes with Bob Davis supporting him as Watson. In Act II, the roles are reversed, with Bob Davis as Hercule Poirot and Steve Hendrickson as the Watson-like Arthur Hastings. To add to the fun, both Watson and Hastings become primary drivers of the plot as they each fall prey to beautiful, charming women with hidden agendas and very few scruples.

The Poirot segment of the play is based on the Agatha Christie classic "Murder on the Links." The Holmes segment does not map neatly onto any canonical story, but the strong Sherlockian elements made me feel like I was witnessing a genuine Holmes adventure. And the end of Act I presented the most touching demonstration of Holmes's friendship with Watson that I have ever seen. Without spoilers, I'll simply say that Holmes stepped out of his emotionless-calculating-machine persona with utter conviction.

While the play premiered in Minnesota, we can hope that it will be presented in many more venues across the country, giving more Sherlockians access to one of the most original and imaginative murder mysteries I've ever seen!

As a reminder, The Sherlockian Theatrical Society is a non-judgmental society. It is our belief that any play about Sherlock Holmes is worth attending. We love Sherlock Holmes and we love live theater, so nothing will deter us off of our chosen path.

Break a leg!!!

Dallas, TX
Nov.01, 2024