

Theatre Review – The Play That Goes Wrong ****



Honestly! Five minutes before curtains up and they've only gone and lost crucial canine cast-member, *Winston*, again.

In reaching for the stars (or a review rating of 1* at least) Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society throw off, yet again, the shackles of contemporary stagecraft orthodoxy and badly go where no ham-dram company has been before. Or should ever endeavour. The clue is in the title. Their ambitions are Titanic – with similar outcomes. Their impotence of being earnest sees this never ending national tour yet again holding them hostages to their own misfortunes.

With internal organ damage warnings issued, side-splitting, pant-compromising howlers anticipated aplenty, the show must go on, and it does relentlessly – on and on and on. Michael Green's *The Art Of Course Acting* defines its cast as ones whom, 'Can remember the pauses but not the lines.' CPDS's opus, *Murder At Haversham Manor*, is exactly what it says on the tin – excruciating murder indeed.

And the family name, Haversham? She went up in flames in Great Expectations. Clue there!

Be wary tonight, any expectations will grate exceedingly. Thus opens this delightfully contrived artifice from the teasingly wicked pens of Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer and Henry Shields. A play within a play set in the country during the genteel inter-bellum years when Agatha Christie was in her prime. She remains alone in that regard. The audience is invited to suspend reality and quite possibly themselves from a rope. They are more inclined to ask, 'Why do it?' Rather than, 'Who dunnit?' Did not this dramatic company produce an alt.Chekovian micro-budget production of '*Two Sisters*'? Their radical take on C.S. Lewis's *The Lion & The Wardrobe* left both audiences and critics speechless as did the austerity inspired musical *CAT*.

This is a resplendent goofy sleuth spoof tour de farce of cock-up, clockwork precision and incompetent calculated chaos. The Inspector calls them a 'terrible audience,' for laughing at their endeavours. Indeed, he has observed a lady in the third row who has not laughed at all for the past forty-five minutes. Ever ahead of the game the cast are the first to be gobsmacked in this literarily knockout production.

The frantic denouement sees them bringing the house down. Deliriously silly and giddy, certainly one to set the Morningside aunts all a frothy.

You will definitely never go to see a play like this again. Grief encounters of the gut-busting kind. Perilously recommended.

[Tickets here](#)