

ADJUDICATORS COMMENTS 2022/23

Society	Cosmopolitan Players		
Production	Sherlock Holmes - The Hound of the Baskervilles		
Adjudicator	Jenny Wemyss		
Date	23.3.23	Matinee or Eve?	Evening

The percentage mark of all categories combined provides the score for the Best Musical and Best Play awards. The combined percentage mark for categories 1 – 3 provide the score for the Best Visual Presentation Award.

The questions posed in each category are suggestions only, and provided as a guideline for the adjudicator. Other comments should be written if these are felt to be more appropriate to this adjudication.

Positive comments on the production's strengths	
1	<p>Include positive comments on any of the following aspects of the production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting; • Costumes, hair & makeup; • Props, scenery & projections; • Sound; • Musical direction / orchestra / band; • Projection; • Acting • Singing • Direction • Choreography / Movement <p>Upon entering the studio space at the Carriageworks Theatre, the audience were met with three mime characters, already on stage. They performed stylised movement which was effective in intriguing the audience from the moment they entered the room.</p> <p>Traverse staging was chosen for the performance, which kept the audience very close to the action and allowed them to feel a part of the mystery. The Actors did a wonderful job of maintaining their focus which I can imagine would be difficult in this proximity. I always worry with non-traditional staging that things might be missed due to sight-lines, however, this was never a problem for me. Direction by Carolyn Craven kept everything constantly moving to ensure the audience was always drawn to the action.</p> <p>The scenery was minimalist, with four stools being used in a number of ways to allude to the variety of settings. It was the role of the mime artists to move the scenery and props and this seemed well rehearsed. Actors were also used to set the scene, such as in the picture gallery and when one of the mime artists became a coat/hat stand.</p>

		<p>A monochrome theme was used in the props and some of the costumes, usually stripy, which was effective. It was clear that time had been taken to add these details.</p> <p>Lighting was very simple but worked within the piece. A backlight was used to create the shadow of the Hound, an essential part of the mystery. I'd have liked the Hound puppet to be even closer to the light to make the shadow bigger and therefore, scarier. The red light during these moments worked well.</p> <p>In the first minutes of the show Graham Siddle was killed by the hound, providing a dramatic opening. I was initially worried (due to the staging having no wings) that we would see him forced to stand up and walk off the stage. This would obviously have ruined the whole death scene, however it was nice to see that this was tackled by the director and cast to ensure theatrics were brought to the moment with the Mime Artists, a cloth and drum.</p> <p>It was nice to hear original music composed by Danny Gamble, this fitted perfectly with what we might expect from a Holmes mystery.</p> <p>Richard Hunt provided my favourite performance of the play as Dr Watson, he was likeable and drove the narrative. The cast seemed gelled as a whole and I imagine they had great fun rehearsing this production!</p>
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Constructive comments on the production's weaknesses / opportunities for improvements

2	<p>Include constructive comments on any of the following aspects of the production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lighting; ● Costumes, hair & makeup; ● Props, scenery & projections; ● Sound; ● Musical direction / orchestra / band; ● Projection; ● Acting ● Singing ● Direction ● Choreography / Movement 	<p>As mentioned above the show was staged in a way which invited the audience to be very close to the events of the play, therefore when something drew us out of the action it was more jarring. The fog machine was one of these things; it was situated onstage and the blue light/clicking it produced when used was distracting. I wish in some way this had been covered or disguised.</p> <p>The staging occasionally limited the movement of the actors who might point/reference needing to go in one direction, they'd then walk away in the opposite. Obviously, this is a minor niggle to consider to ensure the audience remains fully immersed.</p>
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Overall Production / Entertainment Value		
3	<p>Provide a conclusion on the production, and include any comments on aspects of the production not covered by the above entries.</p>	<p>I have to say, I am a huge fan of a Sherlock Holmes mystery, so this was a very enjoyable evening. It was lovely to see this stylised and staged in a way I hadn't been expecting, bringing a new twist to the tale.</p> <p>A great variety of characters, performed with energy and it was never static or boring! I look forward to seeing what the Cosmopolitan Players will put on next.</p>