



ADJUDICATORS COMMENTS 2021/22

Society	Cosmopolitan Players		
Production	Agatha Crysty and the Murder Mystery Dinner		
Adjudicator	Richard Pascoe		
Date	24th Feb - Thursday	Matinee or Eve?	Eve

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>This was a very enjoyable evening of mystery drama. I was intrigued throughout. So there was a good sense of place and situation put across. Many elements successfully supported the audience to focus on the drama unfolding.</p> <p>The music as we waited for the start set a sense of mild tension. I really liked how the stage was furnished. It is a small space yet the setting created distinct areas and a sense of a room much larger than the reality. One side being the phone and CD player – important at times so key to be seen easily. Then on the other side the drinks bar. Then chairs arranged to create reasonable depth. This allowed the direction to create varied tableaux.</p> <p>The props were consistent and in keeping with the sense of place and the action going on. E.g. we believed they were murder mystery briefs. The murder mystery props felt authentically pulled together by Tanya. The costuming was simple, but effective. I especially appreciated the touch of those who had planned to stay over had casual clothes to wear for the following day.</p> <p>The direction was rarely flashy, but it was effective. People moved for a reason, and just about enough to create a sense of the scenes developing. The use</p>

		<p>of the two exits from the stage were consistently thought through – I felt we were watching a single room in a larger house.</p> <p>Acting: we knew who everyone was. The play itself does a pretty good way of hammering this over to the audience through Geoffrey’s dialogue, but we appreciated the clear and consistent sense of who each character was. I was most appreciative of those characters who were clear throughout, even when they were not the centre of the action. Duncan Crocker (played by Matthew) was the best example – whenever I looked at him I could see what he was thinking and how he fitted into the scene at that moment.</p> <p>The story continued even when there were mistakes. The actors found their way through little issues and quickly brought everything back into the drama. There was a sense of everyone working together and supporting each other.</p> <p>Some other specifically good things done by the characters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agatha (Carolyn) throughout had the balance of slight dottiness but with razor sharp observation. Also, a sense of being the outsider in the room. - Geoffrey (Richard) came across fully as a self-obsessed and over-confident business owner. He then did well to bring the other sides of his character – seeming distress at the loss of his wife, then anger at being caught.
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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>Lighting – it was a shame that the light for the stage manager at the back of the seating was so bright that it was distracting in the blackouts.</p> <p>Sound: some actors were hard to hear. A little more projection, even in such a small space, would have been appreciated. Especially in a murder mystery where we are enjoying being attentive to small details it is frustrating when you feel you are missing clues.</p> <p>Acting: Everyone delivered their lines with conviction, but some would drop out of character when they were not the centre of the scene. There was occasionally the sense that the actors would look</p>
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		<p>across to the person they knew was about to speak because it is in the script while waiting for their next line to come. We all know it is very hard to continue to respond naturally in a scene you have rehearsed many times (in my case obsessed with remembering my next line), so this is understandable.</p> <p>On our evening there were a number of dropped lines (covered well by the prompt). There were also moments where we wondered if there had been a dropped line or even a line in the wrong place. This may not be the case, but it had that sense. The drama continued, but it pulled us out of the scene and made us wonder if we were missing or mishearing an important plot point.</p> <p>Many performances could have been heightened further, as in that dramatic sense of unrealistic things happening but with characters still fully invested. The plot and the situation is ridiculous, as a good murder mystery should be. Characters move from squabbling, to mourning the death of friends/loved ones, back to squabbling, to feeling in personal danger, back to general chit-chat. None of this is realistic. The overall effect of the show would be greater if the characters dismissed the ridiculousness of some of these transitions and just threw themselves into it a little more.</p>
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 had a lovely evening. The settings was strong, the direction was effective, the characters were all clear. This meant I could focus on enjoying the story in front of me.</p> <p>There was a sense of some actors being more experienced than others, but a strong sense of an ensemble working together (even with lines dropped and some scenes having brief moments of confusion).</p> <p>Put it this way – I definitely plan to come to enjoy the next Agatha Crusty mystery in the summer.</p>