

Cruise of Carnage a Murder Mystery presented by Bispham Castaways at Holy Family Catholic Church, Links Road, North Shore, Bispham, Blackpool on Saturday, 9th April, 2022.

Another trip to the Fylde Coast, my first meeting with the Committee and Members of Bispham CastAways and my visit opportunity to see and review a Murder Mystery. I really have enjoyed my six/seven adventures to the Fylde Coast in recent months where I have had the privilege and pleasure to meet and speak with so many friendly and talented theatre folk along the way and tonight was no different!

Holy Family Catholic Church Hall was packed to the rafters and you could just tell that the 'Loyal supporters', from this very friendly and welcoming theatre company were ready and waiting for a 'fun filled evening of entertainment' ... none of us were to be disappointed! Not only did we have the 'murder to solve' (which I was unquestionably rubbish at by the way), but we had a 'quiz' to struggle with (wasn't right good at that either) but what I did not struggle with was the absolutely delicious 'hot pot and apple pie supper' (top form with this) ... what more could you ask for after a trip down the 'Golden Mile' to get there!

'Cruise of Carnage'... an 'interactive murder mystery' written by one of Bispham CastAway's very own... the ever so talented Susan Hope. (What must go on in this lady's mind is unthinkable in a good way ahahahah). This is a tale of trouble, tantrums and murder on the high seas! A story that surrounds a group of people who book a trip on a cruise ship for various reasons, unaware that their lives are already interwoven in various ways! There is a 'killer' on board ship... a killer who 'bumps off' a number of passengers in a variety of ways... YOUR JOB ... to identify the killer!

The evening was split into three Acts... When Act 1 was complete we had our Hot Pot Supper (yummy). Following Act 2 we had our Apple Pie (yummy again) plus the cast mingled between us all and we had the opportunity to 'grill' them! When Act 3 concluded ... the cast lined up and we were allowed to 'grill' them further... it was then down to us to identify our killer.... I really was rubbish at this!

The Cast – there were nine members in the cast... **Ian Dodd** played 'Stefan Shade' – steward/barman on board ship who had a very shady past; **Nicky Alladice** played 'Barbara 'Babs' Bosum', disgruntled ship's employee who had recently been overlooked for promotion to Captain plus many other issues! **Evelina Julin** played 'Heather Headman', the person who'd been promoted Captain ahead of Barbara. It would appear that Heather is pregnant; the father... one of the ship's passengers! (Evelina had stepped in with just four weeks to opening night – a daunting task), but did a really good job; **Martine Bell** played 'Frieda Fisher' a Court Judge, who's sent down many people but one in particular that affected 'some' of our passengers! **Harry Chambers** played Frank Fisher, father to Freya and who was more than just a friend to our Captain, 'nod nod, wink wink'! **Susan Hope**, (our writer), played 'Freya Fisher' daughter to Frank... struggling to get over the death of her mother...but had many other issues to consider! **Angela Crossley** played 'Dr Gabby Garrul', a Bio Scientist on the cruise with a friend and colleague Lily. Many sides to this shady lady! **Hayley Price** played 'Lily Little' another Bio Scientist and eco-warrior, perhaps not the sweet young lady we think! Finally, **Martin Thompson** played 'Victor Viceroy', owner of the cruise ship, friend' to many supposedly and more than a friend to some! Deep dark past...could he be our killer... WITHOUT DOUBT THEY ALL COULD BE OUR KILLER!

Great casting, totally believable characters created, great stage presence from everyone! All the cast brought something individually and collectively to this production and there's little else you can ask! The question-and-answer sessions during the evening were done really well! Unknown questions posed by audience members cannot have been rehearsed... the ability, from everyone, to ad-lib plausible answers to unrehearsed, unknown questions added to the believability and the reality of the evening! Be proud guys... great job, great production... great night!

Production... these things just do not just happen, so I would like to congratulate Debbie Flavell (Director) on her vision for this production. As I have said previously, this was my first viewing and reviewing of a 'murder mystery', so I really wasn't sure what to expect, but I really did enjoy it from start to finish... well done Debbie...good job!

Staging/Set/Lighting... this was not a theatre by any stretch of the imagination; there was no posh lighting, no hi-tech sound system... so what was achieved in such a small, tight confined space was a credit to all concerned and I do believe, having read the programme, that Ian Fleetwood, Gary Tunnicliffe, Hayley Price and Alan Westhead deserve a great deal of credit for all that... well done guys, great job on a 'shoestring budget'!

Costumes and Props were provided by 'cast members' and where apt and added to the production.

Whilst doing my own piece of 'detective work' before attending the production, I read with interest, Bispham's CastAway's 'Mission Policy' "*We are on a mission to show that theatre is for **EVERYONE** and can give you unbelievable experiences and boosts to both your confidence and wellbeing, no matter your age, disability, gender, sexuality or experience*" and having been there for just one evening with these guys, there is little or no doubt that they are fulfilling every word of that statement and much more I would suggest!

Thank you so much for inviting my wife and I... we both thoroughly enjoyed our evening with you. Can I also thank personally John Flavell and Debbie Flavell for their warm welcome, their hospitality throughout the evening it really was appreciated. We probably won't bump into each other again, so can I just take this opportunity and wish you all well for the future; I really do hope your charity work flourishes and there is little or no doubt that YOUR community really have something 'special' here with you guys!

Stay well and keep safe

Jim Briscoe
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