

NODA Review - Gunshot Wedding

Date

16th August 2025

Society

Bispham CastAways

Venue

Holy Family RC Church

Type of Production

Play

Director

Hayley Price

Written By

Hayley Price

Bispham CastAways invited audiences to don their finest attire and attend a wedding unlike any other—a murder mystery evening complete with supper, themed quiz sheets, and the challenge of guessing the murder weapon. Gunshot Wedding, written and directed by Hayley Price, offered an engaging blend of suspense and humour.

Hayley Price, who originally began writing the play three years ago, returned to the script during her recent maternity leave. Due to an unfortunate accident involving a cast member, she also stepped into the role of Ruth Davidson at short notice—demonstrating both dedication and versatility.

Upon entering the hall, guests were greeted with tables laid out for teams, each adorned with wedding-themed quiz sheets cleverly tied to the show. My guest and I joined four delightful ladies, forming a team that added to the evening's enjoyment—even if I'm still kicking myself over the Madonna–James Bond question!

The set depicted a room in the manor house of Richard and Ruth Davidson, an armchair Down Stage Right, a leather two-seater Stage Left, a small table with a telephone, and a bureau Up Stage adorned with candles, books, and a vase. A drinks cabinet and family portrait added further realism, while the mock wood panelling gave the space a stately feel. The area in front of the curtains was cleverly used for the wedding ceremony itself. Set Build: Ian Fleetwood (Technical Director), Martin Thompson, Graham Wilcock, Conor James, Cordy Jones, Alan Westhead, Debbie Flavell, Charlie Towers, Ian Dodd. Lighting and Sound were well executed, enhancing the atmosphere and supporting the action on stage. Lighting: Alan Westhead, Sound: Kelly Hall & Cordy Jones. Flowers by Kathy Bird.

Hayley Price's direction was inventive and well-paced. A clever device saw all murder victims dressed in red, and the murderer who appeared first on stage, was revealed through real-time action rather than flashbacks. The use of a mysterious figure in black, played by Helen Findlay, allowed the audience to witness each murder without immediately identifying the culprit, a smart and theatrical touch. The evening was hosted by John Flavell, who kept the audience engaged throughout.

The cast delivered an evening of intrigue with each character adding layers to the mystery. Many were under suspicion at various points, keeping the audience guessing. Ian Dodd as Kyle: a man with a grudge, portrayed with conviction. Angela Crossley as Aunt Cece, a character who usually speaks her mind, but this time held back more than expected. Cordy Jones as Mia (the bride) tragically the first victim, but made a memorable impact. Conor James as Noah was in love with Mia and hiding secrets, his confidence grew impressively throughout the performance. Amanda Knapp as Demi was the flamboyant celebrant, full of energy and intrigue and looked to have fun with the role.

Tyler Mercer as Christian (the groom) ruthless and secretive, I thought a little more self-assurance and belief would elevate his performance further. Katy Randall as Ava was another complex character with strong stage presence, pivotal to the narrative; Graham Wilcox as Richard Davidson: a cold-hearted patriarch, convincingly alienating his family. Sue Hope as Molly was also not what she appeared, her character hears voices, subtly revealed through an earpiece. Clues were cleverly embedded for attentive viewers or sleuths. Charlie Towers as Beatrice (the maid): a comedic gem with a strong accent and delightful quirks—her obsession with cushion-plumping and misnaming Aunt Cece as “Look Look”. Beatrice brought great energy and humour to the stage.

Bispham CastAways must be delighted with this in-house production what a lovely evening. With great company at our table, lovely front of house and people serving the food. A mention to the prompt, who I am delighted to know her services were not needed: Tracy Johnson was supposed to be in the play but was still there to support.

Thank you for the invite and hospitality from my guest Chris and I.