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[FreemanJake](#) Jul 2 2009, 10:01 AM Post #1

Newbie
Group: Members
Posts: 1
Joined: 2-July 09
Member No.: 5,059

When somebody told me that Manchester premiere fringe company Vertigo Theatre Productions were doing a "re-imagining" of Dial M for Murder, I let out a silent groan. Vertigo have made a name for themselves by producing witty and sharp comedies and this, well this was something very different for them.

From the very start you are introduced to the main cast including the titular lead of 'M'. You instantly warm to the cast of young performers who all seem to be hiding something at the same time, save for Tony Wendices' (Director and Co-Writer Craig Hepworth) best friend Patrick (played ably by Dale Vicker) who is the epitome of the trendy gay friend, think Rupert Everett from my best friend's wedding, just good. The first couple of scenes serve to set what you think will be the tone for the entire show, although we do get momentary respite with some light humour provided by the truly divine Emma Wilcox and the shows comedic heart Dale Vicker. You are soon however thrust headlong into the first twist in this tale of money, manipulation and good old fashioned greed.

In the scene that sets up what truly is to come we are treated to truly outstanding performances by Adele Stanhope and Rick Carter in the roles of the truly vampish and cold hearted M and the man with a dark past Mark Halliday. These two leads truly set the stage on fire as we begin to witness an intricate game of control being battled out in front of us. It also leaves you feeling that this scene and two actors could quite happily nestle into a television version of this play with no effort at all.

Not long after we are treated to an attack scene that can only be described as thrilling and slightly disturbing with an incredibly shaken and rousing performance from Craig Hepworth who plays the shows victim Tony with passion. Shortly after the attack we are introduced to one of the shows few shortcomings in the form of Stuart Reeves Detective Hubbard. There is nothing wrong with Stuarts performance, in fact quite the contrary he was one of my personal favourites in his characterisation of a man determined to get the truth, but you are left feeling slightly wanting in that it would have been nice to see more of the character and Stuarts performance as this is his first role with Vertigo in which he serves as more than comic relief and instead gets to display a promising dramatic turn, although in fairness this is a criticism that could also be used for Justin Lanatas' role as Christopher Scott, Ms' put upon fiancé who can't seem to see the obvious that his beloved is a true bitch.

By the end of the first act which moves along at breakneck speed we are shown another twist which proves that like an earlier line in the performance, no line is fool proof.

The Second act opens straight from where the first act ends with a worried M taking centre stage, attempting to comfort her brother after his near death whilst at the same time trying to deflect attention from herself against the probing of Hubbard. It's from this point onwards that the complex web of deceit and lies starts to unravel, with a few more twists thrown in for good measure. It's also in the second act that Rick Carter as Mark Halliday really does come alive. By the end of the first act we the audience hate him but by three quarters of the way through you although disliking him secretly wish that he wins the game being played out between M and Mark.

Midway through the second act we get to see Lanata shine as a perfect foil to Reeves' Hubbard in a scene that once again could very easily find itself in a police procedural show. With the two officers butting heads over Hubbards' theory that is bang on the money. Once again though you would have loved to see a little bit more of these two characters, especially Lanata.

As the show comes to a close we are treated to the show stealing performance of the night from the brilliant Emma Wilcox, who as Tonys' friend and accountant Lisa, gives us a woman at breaking point and beyond. It's this final twist that really finishes this show off as Lisa is revealed as the true puppet master of this whole piece and Wilcox



delivers a performance that indicates that although the actress was brilliant in Dog Sees God and The Breakfast Club she still has so much more to give, and we want to see that.

This cast worked brilliantly together and gave us a show they can be proud of. The play as a piece is not without its faults but the performances, especially from Stanhope, Wilcox and not to mention the rest of the cast don't make you care about the faults.

You can't help but think though that maybe it's time Vertigo moved out from Taurus bar, as surely they are bigger and better than this small venue can cater for.

4/5

Jake Freeman



Jake Freeman is a freelance critic and general theatre fan who prefers to concentrate on fringe and slightly off the wall productions.

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


[NEWTOPIC](#)

Replies

 vertigo1	Jul 2 2009, 02:45 PM	Post #2
Newbie 	Thanks so much for the great review, we had a challenging opening night with the heat in the space and the actors could only give half of what they normally do as everyone thought they were going to pass out.	
Group: Members Posts: 8 Joined: 27-November 08 Member No.: 4,207	I to wish i could have sorted the detective Hubbard roles and Officer Scott roles out to fill them out but it meant loosing some other scenes that we thought were more needed, we also had to re write a lot so things got cut for both grrrr, but if we ever do it again i will work on those 2.	
	Im very proud of my cast for this show, its been a tough rehearsal period and at times we didnt know if it was ever going to get on stage, but hearing the audience response and comment and reading reviews like this one has made everyone very happy and very excited, we cant wait to get back on tonight	
	Craig Hepworth Writer, Director and Actor for 'M'	

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