

# **Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.**

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## **Historic Local Troupe plays Classic Stage**

Written by David on August, 17 2010

Live stage returned recently to the boards at the Strand Theatre when the Shelby County Players launched their 2010-2011 season with an Agatha Christie production.

"And Then There Were None" features an impressive cast and a very professional production," said audience member Barbara Rogers, during the SCP's recent four day run at the downtown venue.

The play, directed by Tiffany Wilson with a set designed by Russ Gross, featured a cast of seasoned local talent both on stage and behind.

"I really enjoyed the play," said Judy Ashton another patron. "The set was gorgeous and took me back to the Art Deco period. The actors were believable and seemed to be enjoying their parts. I look forward to more Shelby County Players productions."

Penned by Christie as a novel in 1939 and then adapted for the stage by her in 1943, the play is no stranger to adaption, especially considering its two previous politically incorrect titles.

Designed as a comedy of manners in a genre this Grand Dame of literature made her own, the cast proves so believable I wanted all the characters dead by the end of the first act. It would be rather oxymoronic to single out one actor in this play of snidely repugnant characters; they all were equally up to the task of playing such droll roles.

From the opening dialogue of inane patter and small-talk loaded with innuendo, personal quirks and mannerisms, the 11-member cast was proficient to point of making one crave murder and more of it. Gross, who eloquently doubled as a judge, was merely one shining performance in this play about bores, blokes and hypocrites and their eventual demise.

Each and every actor, in fact, so personified their role that I often wondered in the back of my mind, whether or not Christie was parodying herself alongside the vagaries of British society and colonial history. A few of the accents needed work, but overall, each character was obnoxiously well acted and deserved their twisted fate.

"I enjoyed all the twists and turns, wondering where and when the next dead body would be found" said audience member Carolyn Statler.

Revolving about guilt and what Sartre called "bad faith," the plot was itself a moral dilemma that made one wonder about history, politics and just why corrupt empires die and fade away. To her credit, Christie, rather bluntly show us why: it's the people and their foibles, secrets and moral conundrums.

"I chose to direct this play for several reasons," said Wilson, who also acted in another incarnation of the story 15 years ago. "The biggest reason being that mystery and suspense stories have always interested me... Out of the seven shows I have now directed for the Shelby County Players, five of them have been murder mysteries."

Several hundred patrons attended SCP's recent four-day run at the Strand Theatre and the players are scheduled to return this October with "Inspecting Carol," a Daniel Sullivan play, directed by Gross. The multi-talented ensemble will also stage "Twelve Dancing Princesses," a play by Phyllis McCallum, directed by Keeley Payne in December. Next spring the troupe will bring William Inge's "Picnic" to life for local patrons.

Formed in 1988, the Shelby County Players have staged more than 100 plays featuring purely local talent and this cast and crew typified the hard work, dedication and passion necessary to achieve live theater. From props to costumes to an eye-catching set, this troupe of amateur thespians and their friends put on a fine performance and should be commended: no pun intended.

**Images on this post:**



**SUBMITTED BY: TERRANCE ALDRIDGE**

*This independent review does not express the opinion of the Strand Theatre.*

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