

# Spot-on Playgoers deserve to make a killing

**REVIEW:** The Perfect Murder, performed by Workington Playgoers until Saturday at the Theatre Royal, Workington

THIS play was right up my street – I love a good murder case and an intriguing plot and The Perfect Murder gave me exactly that.

I had never seen the original play by Sahun McKenna so I wasn't quite sure what to expect, but the Playgoers certainly bagged themselves a good show to stage.

They are among the first amateur groups to perform this play and they certainly have my gratitude.

This isn't your typical husband hates wife and plots murder. Twists and turns really keep you on your toes and it certainly doesn't lack humour either.

At the beginning the ongoings reminded me a bit of a good British soap-opera – a couple bickering all the time, a bit of cheating thrown in there with some veiled insults. But it was in the most dramatic moments that the ability of the actors really came out.

Seeing them cracking a joke in the most serious moments and making it an enjoyable show for the public rather than



**MURDER AFORETHOUGHT:** Jenni Rushton (left) and Pat Brinicombe of Workington Playgoers. Jenni directs *The Perfect Murder* at the Theatre Royal

turning it into a farce was very remarkable.

The second act was a twist in the twist, with the tone completely changing and turning the atmosphere in that of a real thriller. Psychics, paranormal activities and general spookiness were added to the drama and the tension got really high towards the end, with the audience on the edge of their seats.

The play is McKenna's adaptation of the best-selling

novella of the same name by Peter James, who has cultivated a massive following with his book series featuring ace detective Chief Superintendent Roy Grace. It's the first of the series to be adapted for the stage and it follows Grace on his first homicide as a detective constable.

In *The Perfect Murder* we see a brilliant Andy Palmer as Victor Smiley, the unhappy husband. Victor has hatched a plot

to bump off his wife Joan in what he thinks will be the perfect murder. His plan is to set up home with Kamila, who is currently charging him £40 a visit for her affections.

But Joan, who has a lover too – Don – is also harbouring dark and malevolent thoughts towards Victor.

Andy really kept our eyes glued to the stage and delivered the character perfectly, while Sarah Delorme perfectly fitted the black comedy genre as Victor's wife Joan. Her stage-partner Mike Hoggarth as Don Kirk was the one that made me laugh the most, with his fake-cockney clichés. And had I not been told that Jane Douglas had stepped into the role of Victor's lover Kamila only two weeks ago, I would never have been able to tell.

The play is modern, fast-paced and full of surprises. The work of sound designer Jamie Sims and lighting designer Geoff Brinicombe really added that final touch to the atmosphere.

I definitely recommend getting yourselves to the Theatre Royal to see this show – you won't be disappointed.

● Performances start at 7.30pm each night and tickets cost £10 for adults and £9 concessions. Call the ticket line on 01900 603161 or email [wplaygoers@btinternet.com](mailto:wplaygoers@btinternet.com)

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