

The Heist by Jo Smith.

Many congratulations to the cast and crew of The Heist, a well written piece which had us all guessing from start to finish. Lovely twists and turns to keep us all amused.

Set in an old London style pub, it followed the story of "Smudger" Smith, attempting to get his own back on the local bookie, who wouldn't settle his bet. This involved getting his old mates back together, however reluctantly, for "one last job".

I must start with the set, which was excellent and richly deserved the "wow" I heard from members of the audience on Thursday evening. I really felt I was in the pub for the night. It was quite obvious that a lot of hard work had been put in by the production crew to create a great place for the actors to really bring alive their characters.

It was a well directed piece. Great use of the space allowed, especially with so many cast on stage at one time. I am a great believer in using different levels of furniture, and if you have it, use it. I was happy to see that there was not a wasted bit of furniture on the set, from high to low stools and even the tables. From the central seat I occupied I could see all the cast, all of the time. No masking at any time. Good job.

The whole cast were very believable in their given roles. Our lovely landlady, Liz, who had a lot to put up with, and who proved to be quite devious....obviously learning from her brother, portrayed with such ease by Alicia; her daughter, Suze played by Grace. Good accent Grace, not too OTT. "Smudger" Smith played by Bob, giving us an almost "Baldrickesq" performance...." I have a cunning plan...." which at every turn seemed to go wrong. Brilliant work.

Big Al, "Jacko" "Whitey" and Mark (too young to acquire a nickname) played by David, John, Colin and Luke complimented each other very well and helped to create a good ensemble atmosphere. When you all put on your boiler suits followed by the tights it was hilarious. Just what the director ordered no doubt. It's not easy to keep a character going when your head is covered, and you all performed well, but if you have to speak, please bring the levels up, there were occasions when the sound was lost.

When Jeannie arrived, entering the pub like a storm trooper, I knew we were in for a feisty treat from Carol. The eastend wife who takes care of everything. Well written parts give the performer a chance to excel. Well done Carol.

DCI Stoner....well Simon, not a lot I can say. Typical bent copper. Well delivered, but I wouldn't expect anything else. Excellent characterisation, short, but very sweet.

I have a question/query. In what timeline were we supposed to be? I had hoped, from reading the directors notes that we were in for a step back in time, maybe the 70s, especially given that Peterman is a bit of an old phrase. With robbers wearing tights on their heads and old style gangland talk, I would've loved to have seen DCI Stoner in flares and a Jason King hairstyle. (although Simon is probably too young to know who Jason King was!) , just right for a copper on the take. There could've been full ashtrays on the tables too....Ah well, 'twas not to be....given that Mark had a mobile and the use of red dye....an opportunity lost, perhaps?

Once again, FADS, you have brought us all joy. An evening full of fun. Thank you.

Marlene.