

Stage Two Downham

Presents

Gaslight

A Victorian thriller
by Patrick Hamilton

from

Wednesday, November 24th to
Saturday, November 27th
at 7.30 p.m.

Tickets: £4.50 from Tourist Information

FOR many years, Stage Two Downham has been producing a high standard of productions.

Although more known for its satires and comedies, this year saw a change of genre, in the shape of Tim Kelly's dramatised version of Mary Shelley's classic novel "Frankenstein" – a Gothic horror.

The story takes place on the shores of Lake Geneva in the late 1800s and finds Dr Frankenstein in a somewhat distressed state on the night of his wedding. He begins to confess his dark secrets to his new bride and it is not long before we see the reasons for his solace played out in front of us. What ensues from then on is a story of greed, fear and passion with morals still as prevalent today as they were when the book was first written in 1817.

With a strong supporting cast, Steve Cooke was able to deliver a

highly-commendable portrayal of the disconcerting Doctor, while James Masterman's Creature provided the perfect foil to his creator with a performance that was more Robert De Niro than Peter Boyle.

Director Fran Osborne's greatest challenge was making sure that a play filled with heavy dialogue did not become too static.

A challenge that was duly conquered, was complemented by the very effective set design that made for some truly spine-chilling moments.

An evening with Downham Stage Two never fails to delight, the only shame being that not more people witnessed the hard work on show.

I shall look forward to returning for another thoroughly enjoyable experience and, of course, for the tea and biscuits.

Gavin Makel

Weekendplus

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Another success for this first-class group

IT is not an easy task to produce a serious period drama.

The restrained archaic language, the sombre Victorian atmosphere, the tensions and pace of a thriller presented a challenge to Downham Stage Two.

It was a challenge which the company met very successfully in its performance of "Gaslight," by Patrick Hamilton.

Patrick Hamilton was himself the victim of a bullying father and Liz Wrigley, as Bella Manningham, sensitively portrayed the abused wife, relentlessly bullied by her domineering husband.

She cleverly sustained the pathos and fear in the first act and then gradually began to turn the tables on her tyrannical husband in Act Two, with the help of Rough, the ex-police inspector.

Eddie Bootle was skilful in bal-

ancing the urgency needed to solve the crime, with snippets of wit and humour, which he timed so well.

I would have liked to "hate" Mr Manningham rather more for his despicable treatment of his poor wife and his previous murderous crimes.

His character was at times too nice, but Michael O'Hagan certainly looked the part of a Victorian gentleman.

Both Deborah Tudisco, as the cheeky maid, Nancy, and Pat Hargreaves, as Elizabeth the housekeeper, gave convincing performances and must be congratulated on their "London" accents and contrasting characterisations. Their humour was refreshing and engaging.

Brian Howarth as the arm of the law added authority to the dramatic ending.

As the curtain rose we were drawn into a wonderful Victorian parlour, built by Dan Bradbury. With its deep red walls, tiled fireplace and authentic furniture and artefacts, we were transported back in time.

The silent member of the cast, without which there would be no play, was the flickering gaslight. David King and David Scott produced excellent effects and created the gloomy interior of a Victorian home, accentuated by haunting music and sound effects. Excellent costumes and props completed the show, produced by Margaret Smith and Lesley Howarth.

Under the direction of Mel Scoriah, who brings to every play his wealth of experience and knowledge, Downham Stage Two has yet again delighted its audiences.

F.O.



Drama by Gaslight

A VICTORIAN thriller comes to the Downham stage later this month.

The village's accomplished Stage Two drama group is set to perform Patrick Hamilton's Victorian thriller, "Gaslight".

Rehearsals are well under way, while work goes on to create an atmospheric Victorian set, illuminated, of course, by gaslight.

The play will be staged at Downham Village Hall from November 24th to 27th inclusive, with nightly performances beginning 7-30 p.m.

Tickets, priced at £4.50, are available in advance from Clitheroe Tourist Information Centre, or on the door.

Pictured are the cast of "Gaslight" during dress rehearsals. (s)

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