

## Theatre Review 'The Hound'

I had a strange experience on the Saturday afternoon before I saw *The Hound*. I was working away in the kitchen with Radio 4 playing quietly in the background when,

suddenly I heard words that had inspired me before. I turned up the volume and sat down. The afternoon drama was *The Browning Version* by Terence Rattigan. But I was not listening to Michael York playing Crocker-Harries but our familiar Phillip Croxson reprising his 2006 performance with The Players. It was his finest and most memorable role to date. This was my theatrical 'main course' for the day. 'The Hound' was a delicious, calorie-laden dessert.

### The Play's the Thing

How can we be so lucky as to have Tony Hinds lurking malevolently in our midst? With a Hammer Horror playwright and our Wychwood Players crew, it was a splendid vehicle.

The cast of fourteen was an embarrassment of riches because there was not a weak spot in the casting. Each supporting actor provided us with a perfect little jewel of a performance. I single out only two- Nick O'Keefe's 'cabbie' was fantastic. When he walked off the stage after his bit, I wanted to roll back the film to hear and see him again. And then there was Rose Hartley's Lady



Franklyn, a triumph of comic relief, the classic aristocratic airhead: first on the scene and the last to know the score.

There were our old friends in various guises, Phillip C. as a man of the

cloth with hidden depths; Amanda Keighley as Alice Barrymore in floods - no, tsunami of tears; John Drew as the aged family retainer, Gill Collins, a veritable Constable painting in her lovely white dress (a parasol would have been nice) and dear Richard Hartley completely out of character and, finally, the recipient of just desserts from 'The Hound'.

### Splendid Newcomers

And then, all the wonderful newcomers Stella O'Keefe's put-upon Mrs Hudson; Kim Bradley's peasant girl; Harry Cailtherd's (if you sneezed, you missed him) Sir Hugo Baskerville; Ralph Wear's down-to-earth, new world Sir Henry and Jake Acock's Selden.

The Sherlockian Bobbsey Twins must be given the lightest of once-overs. Rob Gorton and Mark Jessey, clean shaven and mutton-chopped - just let me say this- "*Benedict Cumberbatch, watch your back!*" Dudley Thompson. Director Extraordinaire. Oh dear, perhaps I should consider a life career in P.R. I am not a very good critic. I love you all too much.

**Trudy Yates**