

Society : Shinfield Players
Production : And Then There Were None
Date : 5th June
Venue : SPT
District : 14

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[Show Report](#)

Show Report- Overview

And Then There Were None was a visually impressive and thoughtfully staged production. The creative team's appreciation of Agatha Christie's work was evident in the set design, lighting, and scene transitions, all of which combined to create a highly polished theatrical experience. The set, with its art deco details and the clever use of the soldiers on the mantelpiece, provided a wonderfully atmospheric backdrop.

The blocking was well considered, making effective use of the space and helping to guide the audience's attention throughout. While there were many strengths in the production, at times the pacing felt a little slow, which occasionally reduced the sense of tension needed to fully drive the suspense of the piece — though I appreciate that with a cast including some newer performers stepping into larger roles, this was likely a considered balance between maintaining clarity and pace. Certain moments that could have brimmed with dramatic impact were slightly diminished by pauses that felt too prolonged.

Nevertheless, this was an engaging and solid production with excellent technical execution and several individual performances that were particularly commendable.

Cast

Martyn Washbourne (Mr Narracott / Mr Anthony Marston)

Martyn delivered a commendable dual-role performance. His accent work was convincing and his interpretation of Marston captured a good sense of cheekiness and energy. However, Anthony Marston is typically portrayed as a much younger man — full of youthful arrogance and 1930s flair — and while I fully appreciate that casting decisions must often reflect the actors available at audition, this particular piece of casting didn't quite match the usual portrayal of the role. That said, this is no reflection on Martyn's efforts — I understand he even took steps to visually adapt for the role, and his performance was both committed and energetically delivered. With continued development and awareness of ensemble balance, Martyn has a great deal to offer.

Karen Bird (Mrs Ethel Rogers)

Karen portrayed Mrs Rogers with the right mix of nervousness and anxiety befitting the character. Her comedic timing added lightness to some early scenes, though a slightly stronger stage presence would help elevate her performance further. A very good contribution to the ensemble.

Brian Nixey (General Mackenzie)

Brian brought genuine warmth and a touching vulnerability to General Mackenzie. While some dialogue delivery occasionally felt ad-libbed or inconsistent with the tone of the script, his overall portrayal of a man haunted by the past was very effective and moving.

Chris Pett (Mr Tom Rogers)

Chris demonstrated strong stage presence, clear diction, and excellent projection. His portrayal conveyed an intriguing sinister undertone that added depth to his character. This was a well-rounded and confident performance.

Barbara Richards (Miss Emily Brent)

Barbara delivered one of the standout performances of the evening. Her pointed tone and commanding presence perfectly captured the strict, moralistic nature of Miss Brent. Her portrayal was engaging throughout—one would certainly not wish to befriend this formidable woman! A superb performance.

Ken Deeks (Sir Lawrence Wargrave)

Ken captured the cold intelligence of Wargrave well, particularly in the final scenes. However, the pacing of his earlier line delivery was somewhat slow, which at times reduced the dramatic impact. A slightly faster tempo and stronger tonal variation could further heighten the portrayal.

Matt Lugg (Dr Armstrong)

Matt delivered a strong and nuanced performance. He convincingly conveyed the doctor's initial confidence and gradual unravelling. His subtle hints at Armstrong's past struggles added authenticity. A very effective and layered portrayal.

Dan Walford (Mr Davis / Mr Blore)

Dan should be applauded for tackling the challenging South African accent, which he managed admirably. In more intimate scenes, his pace and chemistry with fellow actors were excellent. His performance gave genuine depth to Blore and was a pleasure to watch.

Peter Collins (Captain Lombard)

Peter delivered a solid performance with good stage presence. However, the characterisation of Lombard could have benefited from a greater sense of military superiority and charisma to fully capture the Captain's complex personality. Nevertheless, his energy supported the ensemble effectively.

Millie Naylor (Miss Vera Claythorne)

Millie's performance was nothing short of outstanding. Her clipped 1930s delivery, subtle physicality, and impeccable presence—even in silent moments—were captivating. The final hanging scene was especially powerful and emotionally charged. An exceptional piece of acting.

Creative & Production Team**Co-Directors: Maggie Smith and Cate Naylor**

Maggie Smith and Cate Naylor demonstrated a clear understanding of the source material. The blocking and scene structure were very well thought out, and the musical choices helped segment the play effectively.

One element I would suggest reviewing is the use of the poem throughout the performance. I understand that the full *Ten Little Soldiers* poem was used between scenes to allow for necessary costume changes and transitions, which is a very practical choice. From an audience perspective, I wonder whether using only the relevant lines tied to each specific death, perhaps in later repetitions, might have created an even greater sense of build and suspense. Additionally, I would suggest focusing on increasing the pace and tightening line delivery in future productions, as this would enhance tension and engagement.

Overall, it is clear that the directors made thoughtful choices to balance the practical demands of staging with the dramatic flow of the piece.

Producer: Lucy Watkins

Lucy provided excellent support to the directors and delivered a polished production overall. The professionalism was evident throughout, from the cast to the technical aspects.

Stage Management & Crew

Sam Turner, Jo Marchant, and Emma Fuller executed the stage management to a professional standard. Scene changes, while visually well-conceived, occasionally lacked pace—greater urgency here would help maintain dramatic momentum.

Set Design & Construction

The set design was truly brilliant, transporting the audience to Soldier Island. The backdrop painting by Di Capel and Natalie Clarke was highly detailed and atmospheric. I particularly appreciated how the lighting enhanced the impact of the backcloth, especially in the later scenes, which contributed to the overall tension and sense of isolation.

The creative team—Maggie Smith, Cate Naylor, Graham Vockins, Tim Howling, Di Capel, Natalie Clarke, Sam Turner, Yvonne Mitchell, Steve Toon, and Clive Dolbie—should be commended for their exceptional work.

Lighting & Sound

Designed by Pete Ashton and Natalie Bickle and operated by Graeme Rhodes. The lighting was used very effectively to build atmosphere and create moments of tension throughout the performance. I particularly liked the use of red lighting on the soldiers — this was a very striking visual touch and really reinforced key moments of the unfolding drama.

However, I felt that some scene transitions could have benefited from a slightly quicker execution to maintain pace and dramatic flow.

In terms of sound, it appeared that overhead stage microphones were used. I would suggest that these could have been turned up slightly more, as at times dialogue was a little difficult to catch — particularly during moments where actors were upstage or delivering more intimate lines. A small adjustment here could make a big difference in ensuring all dialogue lands clearly with the audience.

Costumes

Costumes by Debbie Wheeler, Cate Naylor, Maggie Smith, and the cast were perfectly suited to the period and added greatly to the authenticity of the production.

Props

Props, led by Graham Smith, Debbie Wheeler, Cate Naylor, and Maggie Smith, were superb. The soldiers on the mantelpiece were a particular highlight, and the attention to detail in tableware and accessories was exemplary.

Programme

The programme for the show was exceptionally well-crafted, offering a wealth of useful information that enhanced the audience's experience. Its comprehensive content and professional design make it a strong contender for entry into the NODA annual competition 2025/26.

Summary

And Then There Were None was a highly enjoyable and visually polished production, with many commendable performances and exceptional technical delivery. While the acting pace and dramatic tension could be improved in future, the overall staging was a real credit to the Shinfield Players.

Congratulations to the entire cast and creative team on a very accomplished show.

Charlotte Gouldsmith-Leigh NODA Representative - London Region - District 14