

Milton Players intrigue audience with illusion, deception: Angel Street

It was an evening full of chuckles and suspense — most intended, some of it not, which was just an extra bit of icing on the cake for anticipating play-goers.

The play, *Angel Street*, was written by Patrick Hamilton and presented by Milton Players Theatre Group Friday at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre. Paulette Tae was the director.

Although a few minor glitches distracted the audience several times throughout the evening, the audience didn't seem to resent it in the least. *Angel Street* is an entertaining and amusing mystery — the perfect way to end the week. Although some of the actors were more solid in their performances than others, it was a forgiving audience, and the actors' moments of glory outshone the occasional flub, missed line or broken piece of set equipment.

The play takes place in London, England in the year 1880. The setting, the Manningham's house on Angel Street, was well conveyed by the set design, which transformed the stage into an elegant Victorian parlour.

The play centres around three characters, Jack and Bella Manningham, played by Gary Metcalfe and Susan Cranford respectively, and Inspector Rough, played by Geoff Ford. We're first introduced to the couple of the house as they prepare for tea. It's clear all is not well when Jack displays unreasonable anger over a picture taken off the wall. We come to understand that Bella believes she's going out of her mind, an idea reinforced by the many missing items in the house, later found in her drawer. She can't remember taking them.

Shortly after Jack's anger episode, when Bella is alone, Inspector Rough enters the picture. For more than a decade, he has been investigating a murder that took place years ago at the Manningham residence. He thinks a certain member of the household was involved. And so the mystery unfolds. Is Bella insane? Did Jack have anything to do with the long ago crime? Are the maids as innocent as they first appear? These are just a few of the questions that flashed through our minds as the story unraveled.

As with most mysteries, the essence of this play can be captured in two words: illusion and deception.

Nothing is as it first appears on *Angel Street*. This is conveyed from the very beginning by the irony of the play's name. Although titled and set on *Angel Street*, this play is not about pure, innocent angels. In fact, until the mystery is revealed at the end of the night, it's more about ghosts and the dark side. But again, this play is about illusions and how quickly something that once seemed so believable can, in one moment, flip-flop and the situation become



with STEPHANIE THIESSEN

Back stage

completely different.

Every notion we're fed is quickly challenged and we, the play-goers, are trying to determine along with Mrs. Manningham what's real and what's not.

Though we don't admit it, what everyone wants to know is the simple black and white question of who's the good guy and who's the bad guy. With *Angel Street*, we can't quite rest until we know the answer, and can neatly put the characters under the categories we've created. That's the largest cause of our suspense. So while the play itself doesn't depart in any brilliant way from the usual mystery formula, it's fun and entertaining — and appeals to our human nature.

We were kept on the edge of our seats both from the suspense of the mystery, and from wondering if certain actors would remember their lines or need to be prompted by the loud whispering voice at the back of the room.

Two actors provided particularly memorable performances.

Mr. Metcalfe played Jack with an authentic-sounding English accent and acting abilities that were magnified ten-fold anytime his character had a heated shouting scene. Mr. Metcalfe's skills were definitely a highlight of the evening.

Mr. Ford played a humorous inspector who provided most of the comedic relief. The funniest incident though, was the rather unexpected — by anyone — moment when he couldn't close the sliding doors that were part of the set. They had come off their tracks earlier, and hung somewhat crookedly. Mr. Ford tried unsuccessfully to close them for quite a while, as the audience roared with laughter. Finally, with a defeated throw of his hands, he gave up as the audience continued to chuckle.

Though not brilliant in its execution, *Angel Street* provides an enjoyable evening of able — and a few shining — performances.

Angel Street has its final performances this Thursday and Friday at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, located at 500 Childs Dr. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and the show begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at Delacourts, 227 Main St. E., or by calling (905) 875-0629.

Prayer breakfast Feb. 28

For the first time ever, Milton will host the Mayor's Christian Prayer Breakfast.

The breakfast will be held February 28 from 7 to 9 a.m. at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club, 5407 Regional Road 25. It will be presented by Milton's Christian churches.

According to breakfast organizers, this event will provide an opportunity to gather and pray for Milton, for Milton's leaders, and for the various church ministries around town.

"There is one Christian Church in Milton, made up of many different congregations with a rich variety of styles and

ministries. But we share a common purpose in living and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ," reads an announcement for the event.

The guest speaker will be Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale and the honorary chair will be Milton Mayor Gord Krantz.

Tickets for the breakfast cost \$15. To make a reservation or for more information, call Deborah at Southside Community Church at (905) 876-5664. Reservations for tables of eight, or individual tickets, must be accompanied by a cheque made payable to the church.



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