

Review: The Mystery of Edwin Drood

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Alexander Showcase Theatre invites Toronto audiences to solve the mystery of who killed Edwin Drood

In the world of English literature, there are few writers who are as celebrated as the late [Charles Dickens](#). His iconic works, which include *A Christmas Carol*, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist* – just to name a few – still figure prominently in literary discourse even today.

But unknown to many, his last work was an unfinished one. [The Mystery of Edwin Drood](#) is a murder mystery tale that Dickens was writing at the time of his passing.

And for over a century, both fans and scholars have debated the best possible ending to this story.

With no consensus in sight, the [Alexander Showcase Theatre](#)'s musical production of [The Mystery of Edwin Drood](#) allows audience members to choose the ending for themselves, centering on the most important question of the night: *who killed Edwin Drood?*

There's so much to love about this production. The stellar production values, the visually stunning and intricate costumes, as well as the vibrant accompaniment of a live woodwind orchestra all created an atmosphere that allowed the audience to become fully immersed in the story.

But what really brought this play to life was the acting.

From the moment you enter the theatre until the final curtain call, the performers never once broke character. In fact, even as you take your seat, you're immediately greeted by members of the ensemble who, while portraying their onstage persona, charmed and schmoozed you in an effort to gain your nomination to have their character named as the dastardly villain.

While I sometimes find attempts at audience engagement to be forced and tiring, the strength of the writing and the like-ability of the cast members made the whole experience extremely enjoyable.

The acting was superbly polished, with no weak links whatsoever.

While writing this review, I actually found it quite difficult to pinpoint who the standout performers of the night were. For the most part, the dialogue and the singing was on-key and on-point. However, if I were to pick my favourite performances, it would be those of Sharon Zehavi as the seedy Princess Puffer and Luke Hobbs as the night's prime suspect, John Jasper.

Zehavi was absolutely captivating, and in this humble reviewer's opinion, often stole the show from her undeniably brilliant co-stars. Not only did she give the night's most memorable musical performance in the piece, *The Wages of Sin*, her line delivery was flawlessly natural and absolutely believable. It takes real talent to make such a trashy anti-hero loveable, but Zehavi has talent in spades.

For his part, Hobbs was devastatingly debonair as the play's resident villain. With a set of pipes that would rival those of the greatest Broadway performers, Hobbs also succeeded in making you like a character who, for the most part, is undesirable to say the least. The tone and purity of his voice added a touch of magic to every musical number he was in.

Currently playing at the [Al Green Theatre](#), [The Mystery of Edwin Drood](#) provides a delightful night of music, comedy and suspense. If you're a fan of murder mysteries, this is one production you definitely should not miss.

Details:

- [The Mystery of Edwin Drood](#) runs May 2nd to the 11th at the [Al Green Theatre](#) (750 Spadina Avenue)
- Ticket prices range from \$27 for students and seniors, to \$32 for general adult admission. They can be purchased at the box office or [online](#)
- A full listing of show times can be found on [the Alexander Showcase Theatre website](#)