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Sherlock Holmes In The Crucifer Of Blood

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Friday Aug 13, 2010

The game's afoot at Theatre Three and their slick, twisted intelligent production of **Sherlock Holmes in the Crucifer of Blood** is a winner.

The 1978 Tony winning Broadway play written by Paul Giovanni is based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's second Holmes novel The Sign of the Four. After an extended, relevant prologue set in India, we find Holmes at his home at 221B Baker Street in London where Irene St. Claire implores Holmes to find her missing father. Ms. St. Claire's father was a military officer in India 30 years earlier. Captain St. Claire has received an envelope with a mysterious document, murmured something about a curse and then disappeared. Ms. St. Claire begs Holmes to find her father and decipher the mysterious curse. Bored and in need of intellectual stimulation Holmes takes on the case and is aided by his friend and colleague, Dr. Watson.



Chuck Huber as Sherlock Holmes in Sherlock Holmes In The Crucifer Of Blood.



L-R: Curtis Raymond Shideler, Austin Tindle, Chuck Huber in Sherlock Holmes in the Crucifer of Blood.

A fresh, quirky take

Director/Set Designer Jeffrey Schmidt has applied a mechanical "steampunk" style to the play which provides a fresh, dark, quirky take on the Victorian era Holmes (think Tim Burton doing Sherlock Holmes). The multi-level set is filled with gears and cranks and turntables. Aaron Patrick Turner dresses the players with the same "steampunk" retro/futuristic sensibilities. Holmes is attired in a loose, layered, bohemian manner, while the other characters are dressed in a Victorian/Battlestar Galactica mashup. No deerstalker and cape here. Pasty pale makeup and darkened sunken eyes abound.

As Holmes, Chuck Huber is stunning, capturing the eccentricities of the iconic character and instilling him with new shades both light and dark. Huber's Holmes is a mad fiddler, a master of disguises, is fond of his cocaine and is a lean, disheveled mess complaining about the

"insufferable fatigue of idleness". Huber is at his best when explaining Holmes' deductive reasonings. Huber and Schmidt spun magic as leading man and director in Theatre Three's Tally's Folly last season and strike gold with Crucifer of Blood. Jac Alder, can we please have a Schmidt/Huber play every year?



Top: Curtis Raymond Shideler. L-R Front: Chuck Huber, Austin Tindle, Hilary Couch in Sherlock Holmes In The Crucifer Of Blood.

A stylistic gem

The large cast performs well and benefits from Dialect Coach Lydia Mackay. Standouts include Austin Tindle as the dependable Dr. Watson, Gregory Lush as the nefarious Major Ross, Aaron Roberts as the tormented Captain St. Clair and Jakie Cabe as the buffoonish Scotland Yard Inspector Lestrade. At first it seemed that Hilary Couch, as Irene St. Claire, was cast for her ability to scream. However, as her role and the play progresses, Ms. Couch's talents are amazingly evident.

Holmes is often quoted as stating that "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth". In the case of the 'Crucifer of Blood' the truth is self-evident that Theatre Three has produced a stylistic gem to kick off their 2010-2011 season.

Sherlock Holmes In The Crucifer Of Blood continues through September 5, 2010 at Theatre Three, 2800 Routh Street, Suite 168, Dallas, TX 75201. For more information visit www.theatre3dallas.com.

Top: Curtis Raymond Shideler. L-R Front: Chuck Huber, Austin Tindle, Hilary Couch in Sherlock Holmes In The Crucifer Of Blood.

Doug Dodasovich is a playful free lance writer and designer who is passionate about live theater, dance and film. He and his husband, Mark enjoy reading, traveling, friends and family of choice and their 3 miniature dachshunds, Roxie, Velma and Seymour.

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