



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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GREAT DETECTIVES OF OLD TIME RADIO LIVE

Preachrs Podcast OnLine and OnStage

Capri Theatre

Until 22 Feb

Review by Linda Edwards

In the days before TV and during its infancy the great dramas on radio fed the imaginations of listeners, who had to create the pictures in their own minds.

The Great Detectives presents authentic scripts of three of the timeless classics of the late 1940s and 1950s – “Dragnet”, “Candy Matson”, and “Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar” – in a performance staged to resemble a live recording of a radio show in the era.

Producer, director, and actor Benjamin Maio Mackay is incredibly mature and experienced far beyond his 15 years, and it is a stunning achievement to pull off a show like this so successfully at such a young age. He brings out a great deal of vocal flexibility and understanding of the genre from his cast of experienced and talented performers.

Eden Trebilco is outstanding in his roles, particularly as Johnny Dollar. Julia Sciacca is consistently strong but has most fun with Candy Matson. The energy picks up when she launches into this adventure. Jennifer Barry shows extreme versatility in her mix of roles, but all the players are strong and carry the stories effortlessly, although a few have lapses in their accents. When out of the limelight their movements are realistic but not distracting.

Mackay is impressive as an actor, especially as Joe Friday in Dragnet, but could afford to slow down his speech a little and pull back a few centimetres from the microphone, as at times he is difficult to understand. Some of the other actors have a tendency to hold the microphone and their scripts too high, which obscures their faces and detracts from the audience’s experience.

I was disappointed the sound effects were recorded rather than being produced live on stage, as these formed a major component of the soundscapes of the vintage radio dramas, and would have added another visual dimension.

The show is well thought-out and put together and provides an entertaining experience for the audience.

Rating 4 stars (out of 5)