

A HAUNTING IN VENICE



A majority of the dozen or so who attended enjoyed the film though three of us were on the ambivalent to unimpressed spectrum. I'd say it is well worth waiting until this movie pops up on free to view television but that does not swell the coffers at the Alhambra, *our Alhambra*, so dust off a fiver and watch Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, the only character in her vast literary canon who is more irritating than Miss Marple.

I recall an evening at the theatre some twenty years ago when the late and largely unlamented Sir Clement Freud was touring small provincial playhouses to promote his book *FREUD EGO*. In response to invited questions, one being "If you were to become the ruler of the world what would you do first?", he simply said "I would bomb Belgium". He may have been the first Brexiteer but the insufferable egotism of Poirot might have influenced him. Of course, we are largely influenced by David Suchet's characterization as we all tend to compare the actors who have taken the role. I suppose Peter Ustinov figures in such comparison with those of us of a certain age, specifically the third age. Kenneth Branagh has mellowed the sleuth in his retirement years.

The acting, the setting, the cinematic tricks and the diction cannot be faulted in this claustrophobic story of a séance at Hallowe'en to rake over a previous mysterious death in a hostile palazzo. The death count increases by three during the film. Perhaps an evocative location like these Italian canals is wasted while the action takes place at dead of night but it will please murder mystery lovers.

We also got to hear Vera Lynn sing again; and at a tempo to suit age threers – a slow foxtrot!!

Eric Dixon