

## The Plymouth Herald

### Kesselofski and Fiske present Hound of the Baskervilles in Plymouth

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The Hound of The Baskervilles Sherlock Holmes story is known universally as an atmospheric mystery.

Set on Dartmoor, it involves eerie howling in the mists, murder, an escaped prisoner, mistaken identities, and the coveting of property and a title.

What is it looming in the darkness of the moor that could make a man die of fright? A hideous hound of hell? Or a creature of infinite patience and cunning, with a smiling face and a murderous heart?

Well, if you think you know the answers, think again, and look carefully at how the creators have classified the play - as being 'loosely based' on Conan Doyle's work. That two word phrase holds the clue to this entire presentation.

Over the years we've come to love the humour of John Fiske and Paul Kessel, and expect a flow of stand up, slapstick, ad lib, mime, character changes and wit. It's all here again.

And with some blatantly cheeky plot manipulations, like dispatching a character to make a pot of tea when strictly speaking there should be three performers, talking to offstage characters and adding a touch of voice over narration, they manage to tell the entire story of this comedy chiller with just two actors.

And while it is initially agreed that Paul Kessel shall play Holmes, and John Fiske all the rest of the dramatis personae, it's not long before the latter asserts himself and takes over as Holmes, especially when Holmes is required to play the violin.

This is a talent vouchsafed to Fiske but not to Kessel, and Fiske uses it as another indication of his own self centred, generally misguided sense of superiority over his partner, to comic effect.

From then on it's anyone's guess as to who plays who. And, indeed, where the plot is headed for next.

No blood, no horror, just a cosy ramble through the Baskerville story, with a few detours and innovation, and lots of laughs. A pre-Christmas treat.

Kesselofski and Fiske's production of Hound of The Baskervilles is at the Plymouth Drum until December 20.

BILL STONE