

POTPOURRI

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THRILLING MOMENTS *Scenes from the play*

Murder, she said

Fine acting and effective sets charmed the audience who watched Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution*, staged by Stella Maris College

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Sometime in October, first time directors Nayantara Venkatesh and Priyanka Narahari found themselves with the task of adapting Agatha Christie's, *The Witness for the Prosecution* for Stella Maris' annual college play.

"Out of all the options we had, we knew this one was the best," said Nayantara Venkatesh. "Obviously, it comes with a huge reputation," continued Priyanka Narahari, "We knew what we were taking on and we decided to do our best with it."

Both directors and their cast of 14 saw their effort come to fruition on Sunday at the Museum Theatre, Eg-

more.

The Witness for the Prosecution centres around the case of Leonard Vole (Nidhi Punmia) and the nature of his involvement with an older woman, Emily French. Emily was killed right after her will was changed in his favour, and Leonard's last hope rests in the ability of his lawyer, Sir Wilfrid Robarts (Rochana Mohan) and the testimony of his wife, Romaine (Kavya Ramachandran). As the situation escalates and Leonard is put on trial for murder, one witness acts as the definitive factor in deciding his fate.

The play's sets are minimalist but effective, envisioned by Nishanti Sudakar

and her team, with scenes switching between Sir Wilfrid's chambers and the courtroom.

Though the first act set up crucial points that would recur throughout the play, there were parts that lacked the energy it needed, with actors rushing through or stumbling over lines. However, a slow start gave way to a growing sense of urgency and tension as more deception was brought to light.

The scenes at the courtroom saw the play shine, with actors bringing forth their best performances in the midst of a tense scenario.

Rochana Mohan's performance as Sir Wilfrid dominated the play, as she

slipped into the character of a clever, forceful and booming-voiced English barrister with ease. Other standouts were Kavya Ramachandran as Romaine Vole; calm, venomous and confident. Ramachandran proved her character was equal to Mohan's in every measure. There was also Anusha Ganapathi, as Archibald Myers, Wilfrid's rival who charmed the audience with her intense exchanges with Mohan, a terse rivalry that formed the backbone of the play. Nidhi Punmia, playing a charming and naïve Leonard Vole, slowly won the audience to her side with her portrayal of his vulnerability and desperation.