



Review: The Darkroom

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The Dark Room by Steve Lambert, Alma Tavern Theatre

Theatre West have picked a cracker to open this autumn's new writing season. Steve Lambert's beautifully written play is thoughtful, engaging and pacy enough easily to fill a longer run here or, in fact, anywhere.

It's 1949 and Bletchley Park "genius" James (skilfully played by Gerard Cooke) has married Faye (Charlotte Ellis) and hopes to start a family. Old colleague William (a superb role for Duncan Bonner) comes to the country with a call to arms from the FCO. Meanwhile, old ghosts resurface for all three as they face a post-war world that is full of questions.

Pameli Benham's direction and Ruth Stringer's set are magnificent. Alongside Lambert's poetic and resonant script, the star is Charlotte Ellis. She inhabits Faye with uncanny ease, balancing the wibbly mathmo-genius and tory playboy without a hint of cliché.

Lambert here revisits the themes of power, self-determination and downfall with a tenderness and humanity that will have almost universal appeal. Running 'til Saturday 15th, catch it while you can!

Gill Kirk