



1990-91 Season



THE UNEXPECTED GUEST
by Agatha Christie
Jan 30th to Feb 9th

Supported by NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK PLC

THE UNEXPECTED GUEST

by Agatha Christie

Directed by TOM ATKINSON

The Cast

Richard Warwick	.....	WILL JOHNSON
Laura Warwick	.....	MARLENE PENN
Michael Starkwelder	.....	JOHN FENNER
Miss Bennett	.....	LINDSEY DOLBY
Jan Warwick	.....	ROS COOPER
Mrs Warwick	.....	DOT FENNER
Henry Angell	.....	SIMON HART
Sgt. Cadwallader	.....	MIKE BELSON
Inspector Thomas	.....	TREVOR MURLEY
Julian Farrar	.....	WILL JOHNSON
Constable	.....	JACK LAWRENCE

The Setting

Richard Warwick's study

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Sc. 1. About 11.30pm in November
Sc. 2. The following morning about 11.00am

ACT II

Late afternoon, the same day

THERE WILL BE A 15 MINUTE INTERVAL BETWEEN ACTS I AND II

WILL PATRONS PLEASE NOTE THAT PHOTOGRAPHY IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE AUDITORIUM DURING THE PLAY

Production Staff

Stage Manager	.....	JACK LAWRENCE
Assistant Stage Manager	.....	JULIET GRUNDY
Wardrobe	.....	MADELINE GORRILL
Lighting	.....	JOY EDMONDS, TOBY FAULCONBRIDGE
Sound	.....	SIMON HARVEY, STACEY REYNOLDS
Property Mistress	.....	RICHARD PEMBERTON, PETE BARTLEY
Properties	.....	JOYCE HALL
Set Construction	.....	JANET GOULDSON, MARGARET REES
	.....	NIGEL CUTHBERT, JOHN WYATT,
	.....	RON GREY, STAN SMITH, ANNE WOOD

Sense of security

The Unexpected Guest, Loft Theatre

For a production called The Unexpected Guest this has everything you would expect. Murder, intrigue, clues and the obligatory final twist.

There is nothing unexpected about Tom Atkinson's production of this Agatha Christie classic which is probably as it should be.

The characters are all there as is the excellently furnished scene of the crime.

Within this solid frame of tight scripting and realistic set the cast work well to get the clues over to the audience and keep everybody guessing.

Mike Belson's laconic Sgt Cadwallader gets most of the funny lines and makes the most of them. Ros Cooper's controlled portrayal of the family simpleton also deserves praise if only because it steered clear of going over the top.

John Fenner a the unexpected Mr Starkwelder began rather stiffly but managed to relax into the part well.

Special mention should also be made of property mistress Joyce Hall who has managed to find something habitually missing in Agatha Christie plays - a revolver which goes off loudly when you want it.

Overall this was completely untaxing material for the Loft - in a season boasting Pinter and Beckett you would expect something like this as balance - but the Loft played safe, played well and will almost certainly play to full houses.

Matthew Williams

Kept guessing

The Loft Theatre, Leamington - Agatha Christie's The Unexpected Guest

ANOTHER Agatha Christie you may say, but the thriller writer whose books have been enjoyed by countless people and whose works so successfully adapted for television and film, still makes for very satisfactory live theatre.

Perhaps not one of the better known Christie plays, it has a nicely dramatic opening, in complete darkness, with the body in the study.

What follows is a series of expertly trailed red herrings with a clever ending, which you feel you could kick yourself for not having spotted earlier.

The acting was the high standard we expect from the Loft, it cannot be easy to give nothing away when you know who dunnit, but must keep the audience guessing up to the end.

John Fenner as Michael Starkwelder, the guest in question, maintained the mystery until the final moments, while Marlene Penn kept the confusion and terror going, which surely must accompany even the most civilised of Christie drawing room murders.

The Welsh police team of Trevor Murley as the Inspector and the poetical and romantic Sergeant, played by Mike Belson, added welcome touches of humour.

And the audience loved to hate the only Henry Angell, played by Simon Hart, the blackmailing valet nurse to the murdered Richard Warwick.

One of the most satisfying things about Agatha Christie is how she arrives by devious routes at the final solution, after a couple of false conclusions, making a thoroughly enjoyable night out at the Loft. -JS



