

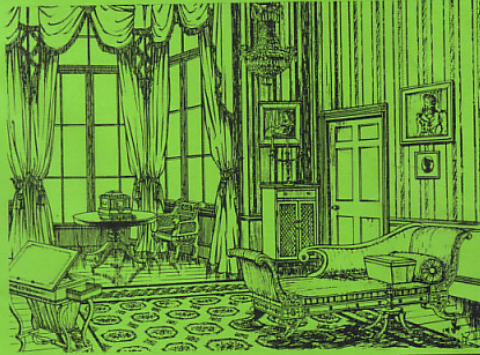


LOFT THEATRE
Victoria Colonnade
Royal Leamington Spa
CV31 3AA

April 8th
to
April 18th

VERONICA'S ROOM

'A taut thriller'
by Ira Levin



Directed by Bill Hamilton

Sponsored by



BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE: (0926) 426341

BOX OFFICE OPENS:

Saturday 28th March 10.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.
Monday - Friday 7.00 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.
and every Saturday morning

VERONICA'S ROOM

by IRA LEVIN

Sponsored by THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND

Director: Bill Hamilton
Set Designed by: Richard Moore
Lighting Designed by: Mike Crisswell
Sound Designed by: Don Sykes

CAST

Woman JUDY MURDOCH
Man JOHN FENNER
Young Woman ROS COOPER
Young Man RICHARD WASHER

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Managers STAN SMITH and BERT BICK
Assistant to the Director SOPHIE HAMILTON
Wardrobe LYNNE HOLLOWAY
Property Mistress REES & SPELMAN
Properties DAVID JORDAN
Lighting Operators MIKE CRISSWELL, PETER BARTLEY
Sound Operators SIMON BUTCHER, DAVID MARSH
Scenic Artist SIMONE RYDER
Set Construction KEITH BERRY, DAVID ELLIS
..... JOHN WYATT, PHIL GORRILL
..... RICHARD PEMBERTON, RON GREY
Stage Carpenter DAVID BRADLEY
Photographs CHRISTOPHER BRADBURY
Posters & Programme Cover Design GRAHAM MORRIS

THERE WILL BE AN INTERVAL OF TWENTY MINUTES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wigs supplied by Costume Call and
dressed by Neville French of Neville Charles Hair Studio

COFFEE LOUNGE EXHIBITION

A double bill, Reginald Hampton and Joan Hallan share the Coffee Lounge wall space during 'Veronica's Room'. Members of the Kenilworth Art Group, Reginald, a founder member is now Chairman, while Joan has been an active member for ten years.

Concentrating initially on oils through evening classes, Reginald produced mainly landscapes and animal studies. Three years ago he switched to pastels, returning only rarely to oils. Joan prefers water colours, specializing in flower studies with an occasional excursion into pastel landscapes.

Excellent shocker

Veronica's Room - Loft

A gripping period drama with incest and necrophilia may not be everyone's cup of poison, but the production of Veronica's Room at The Loft Theatre proved once again how versatile the theatre's company is.

With only four parts to play, the actors were challenged to capture the audience's interest and maintain the suspense, and for the most part, they succeeded.

last saw as the innocent Suzy in Mr Amazing Maze Plays, played an entirely different part here and was excellent as the lead role - Susan or Veronica?

lego girl who is duped into becoming the key actor in a sick drama enacted by a group of psychopaths, her reactions were spot on from trusting compliance to four-lettered rebellion.

Judy Murdoch also gave a superb performance, especially as Veronica's grief-stricken mother, determined to punish her daughter for wrenching her family apart.

The two men in the play were not quite so convincing. Although John Fenner switched realistically from general Irish servant to dictatorial father, his portrayal of Veronica's pathetic and histrionic brother was a little weak.

Similarly Richard Washer was not quite convincing as either Susan's "uptight" date, or the callous necrophiliac of the play's disturbing denouement.

The set was, as ever, perfect down to the last detail, with extremely clever lighting conveying the effect of street lighting outside Veronica's Room. Definitely a play of the short, sharp, shock variety, and not one for the faint-hearted.

Julia Paul

EVENING TELEGRAPH

FIRST NIGHT VERDICT

A thriller to make your nerves jangle

VERONICA'S ROOM Loft Theatre, Leamington. Until Saturday. Running time 2hr.

IF YOU'RE a person of delicate sensibilities and you want a trauma-free and innocent evening out then perhaps you'd better give this play a miss.

This short but beautifully crafted 70s thriller by Ira Levin is sick, shocking and frighteningly twisted.

And although the capable quartet of Loft Theatre players succeed in making it utterly compelling, their success still doesn't quite relieve the disturbed feelings of nausea as the final awful revelations unfold.

A strong central performance by Ros Cooper as the Young Woman ensures the production never lapses into mere melodrama.

Despite the slow start she does a good job of creating and sustaining the tension, and by the end of the first act the audience are left biting their fingernails in suspense.

But she really comes into her own in the longer second half, where she copes extremely skilfully with a whole range of emotions through fear and fury, terror and taunting disbelief to a final pathetic attempt at reason.

What could easily have degenerated into a shouting, screaming farce takes on instead an almost surreal quality as our world and perceptions are turned on their heads, along with hers.

She is ably helped by Judy Murdoch, as the Old Woman, who conveys the lark undertones of the first half beautifully with a series of small touches, pauses and expressions, which manage to be significant to the alert listener without being heavy-handed.

The biggest problem with the production are the accents, which are inconsistent and not terribly convincing.

It's a shame because irritation with the accents can detract from an otherwise fine performance.

Carolyn Holt



■ Ros Cooper is startled by John Fenner's wig, watched by Judy Murdoch.

Nice play, shame about the wig!

Veronica's Room, by Ira Levin, at the Loft Theatre, Leamington until next Saturday.

DIRECTOR Bill Hamilton creates a tense, sinister and hair-raising atmosphere, with powerful performances from his cast of four.

But actor John Fenner struggled with hair-raising problems of his own throughout the first act. He seemed to be not so much wearing a wig, as merely walking underneath it. The thing had a life of its own.

While Ros Cooper was persuaded to impersonate the Veronica of the title, Richard Murdoch sneered, Judy Murdoch twittered and Mr Fenner ambled around practising his Irish brogue.

Not to be outdone, the wig hovered somewhere above Mr Fenner's head, menacingly, threatening to smother him at any moment.

Pace and performance all picked up for the second act as Mr Fenner and Ms Murdoch reappeared looking and sounding 40 years younger.

Powerful acting from all four guided the audience through the intricate plot. Personally, I kinda missed the wig though.

Sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Loft obviously had money to spend on this production, and it showed in all the right places. Richard Moore's set was faultless, lighting and sound crisp and unobtrusive. Not an easy play for an amateur company to attempt. Veronica's Room set a high standard for the remainder of the Loft's 70th season. - GL



