



5th - 15th January 1994

# Spider's Web

by Agatha Christie  
Directed by Stuart Waterworth

Great classic thriller to keep you guessing!

## Spider's Web

by AGATHA CHRISTIE  
directed by STUART WATERWORTH  
set design RICHARD MOORE  
lighting design LOFT THEATRE LIGHTING WORKSHOP

CAST	
Clarissa Hailsham-Brown	JULIET GRUNDY
Sir Rowland Delahaye	JEREMY HAINES
Hugo Birch	RON WEBB
Jeremy Warrender	JASON HARRIS
Mildred Peake	JUDY MURDOCK
Inspector Lord	JOHN FENNER
Pippa Hailsham-Brown	SOPHIE HOLIDAY
Oliver Costello	GABBIE DEEMING
Henry Hailsham-Brown	PHIL REYNOLDS
W.P.C. Jones	ROGER HARDING
Elgin	JOHN WEHNER
	JUDY FERGUSON
	DOUG WATSON

**THE SETTING**  
The action of the play passes in the drawing room of Coppelstone Court, the Hailsham-Brown's home in Kent.

Act I - An evening in March  
Act II - Scene 1 - A quarter of an hour later  
**INTERVAL**  
Act II - Scene II - Ten minutes later  
Act III - A few minutes later

PRODUCTION STAFF	
Stage Management Team	C.MOORE, CHRISTINA HELDENSOHN
Wardrobe	MARY MacDONALD, CLAIRE RICHARDSON
Property Mistresses	TRICIA SPELMAN, ELSPETH DALES
Properties	TRICIA SPELMAN, MARGARET REES
Lighting/Sound Operators	DON SYKES, PETE BARTLEY
	MIKE CRISWELL, JAMES SAUNDERS
Set Construction	RON GREY, RICHARD DRINKWATER, RICHARD MOORE
	RICHARD PEMBERTON, BEN ASHMOORE
Theatre Technician	C.MOORE
Photographs	CHRISTOPHER BRADBURY
Programme Cover & Poster Design	GUS MacDONALD & TIM MEAGOCK

## Interest caught in a Spider's Web

Leamington's Loft Players managed to concoct a beguiling brew of blackmail, murder and comedy in Agatha Christie's *Spider's Web*.

Jeremy Haines, he of the Richard Burton delivery, plays Sir Rowland Delahaye. His performance is natural, and tinged with the just right degree of semi-befuddlement. Mildred Peake makes a good gardener, despite her 'cultured' accent, although perhaps she should be given credit for resisting the stock vocal dialect that so often accompanies this character.

Action is a little slow to begin with, but this is more because of Christie's laborious laying of the motives than anything else.

John Fenner as the not-quite-a-super-sleuth Inspector Lord lacks an alarming amount of charisma, and probably would not have flinched if hit in the face with a brick. But then bumblingly stoic policemen are the stuff of which Christie mysteries are made.

A fine period set, with credit going to the set designers for realism.

The Loft's *Spider's Web* is about as good as Agatha Christie gets.

And with the great mistress of crime even taking a pot-shot or two at her own genre, what better way to savour the land of country homes, gentry, deranged drug addicts and murder most foul.

Spider's Web plays at the Loft Theatre until this Saturday, January 15. Box office (0926) 426314.

## A thrilling web of intrigue

*Spider's Web* by Agatha Christie, The Loft Theatre, Leamington until Saturday January 15

THIS year at The Loft kicks off with a case of crime rather than pantomime, in the form of Agatha Christie's classic thriller *Spider's Web*.

And a tortuously tangled web it turns out to be, with secret drawers, hidden rooms, and a battered body behind the settee.

The set, the drawing room of an imposing country house, is hugely impressive, and there are lots of

Brown, or her diplomat husband Henry? Or one of her upper-class bridge-playing buddies? Or perhaps the eccentric gardener Mildred, or even the butler Elgin? And will Inspector Lord, with his north country bluntness and air of scepticism, manage to solve the crime?

Well, that would be telling. Suffice to say that it's a most enjoyable night out, with plenty of humour in the script as well as the inevitable twists and turns.

One of the highlights of the production is the enormously expressive physiognomy of Jason Harris, playing would-be sophisticate Jeremy Warrender — move over

excellent performances. Juliet Grundy exhibits just the right balance of charm mixed with mischief as Clarissa, and Gabbie Deeming makes an impressive debut as her step-daughter Pippa.

Jeremy Haines is perfectly cast as Clarissa's avuncular guardian, and Ron Webb does well as his friend, the self-righteous Hugo.

One of the highlights of the production is the enormously expressive physiognomy of Jason Harris, playing would-be sophisticate Jeremy Warrender — move over

Rowan Atkinson! The other main roles are filled by a manic Judy Murdoch as Mildred, and John Fenner as the Inspector, who looked a little like Peter Sellers' Clouseau, but exhibited infinitely more acumen.

If you're a fan of whodunnits and fancy pitting your wits against those of Inspector Ford, there's still plenty of time to get caught up in the spider's web; performances continue until Saturday January 15 — ring the Box Office on 426341 for details of tickets. — Phil Appleby.

## Twists and turns

**SPIDER'S WEB** - Loft Theatre, Leamington, to January 15. Running time: 2hr 30min.

ANYONE for murder? Agatha Christie's classic thriller comes up trumps for sheer entertainment value.

Finding a body in the living room is enough to upset any hostess but Juliet Grundy lands herself in even deeper trouble when she tries to hide the evidence.

She is backed by a first rate cast, from 15-year-old Gabbie Deem-

**FIRST NIGHT VERDICT**

ing as a stunner to Jeremy Haines and Ron Webb as a pair of charming old buffers.

But John Fenner also most steals the show as the increasingly bewildered police inspector who finds red herrings as often as clues.

Whodunnit fans will have no trouble fingering the killer, but half the fun is in following the twists and turns.

Marion McMullen

