

LOFT THEATRE
Victoria Colonnade,
Royal Leamington Spa


14th - 24th February 1996
7.30pm

Daphne du Maurier's classic Gothic thriller

Rebecca

adapted by Clifford Williams

sponsored by Shipley Europe Limited



BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE: (01926) 426341
Box office opens: Saturday, 3rd February, 10.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.
and subsequent Saturday mornings.
Weekdays 7.00 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.

Sponsored by  SHIPLEY EUROPE LTD.

Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier

adapted by Clifford Williams

CAST (in order of appearance)

Frith	.....	DOUG WATSON
Beatrice Lacey	.....	HELEN ASHBOURNE
Giles Lacey	.....	BILL BOSWORTH
Frank Crawley	.....	MARTIN GREEN
Maxim de Winter	.....	STUART WATERWORTH
Mrs de Winter	.....	MELISSA BELLAMY
Mrs Danvers	.....	JUDY MURDOCH
Clarice	.....	MARGARET BOSWORTH
Jack Favell	.....	SEAN WORRELL
Colonel Julyan	.....	KEITH BERRY
William Tabb	.....	ERIC TAYLOR
Maid	.....	ELSPETH DALES

Directed by JOHN FENNER

The action of the play takes place in the hall of Mandley, home of Maxim de Winter, some years before the Second World War

ACT 1	ACT II
Scene 1 Evening of 7th May	Scene 1 Early hours of the following morning, 24th June
Scene 2 Morning of 23rd June	Scene 2 Afternoon of the same day
Scene 3 Evening of the same day	Scene 3 Early evening of 26th June

INTERVAL

PRODUCTION STAFF

Set Design	.....	KEITH BERRY, GRAHAM TAYLOR
Stage Manager	.....	SARAH PICKERING
Assistant Stage Manager	.....	PAT HUCKVALE
Wardrobe	.....	MADLINE GORRILL, MARY MACDONALD
Properties	.....	ELSPETH DALES
Lighting Design	.....	WILLIAM WILKINSON
Lighting Operators	.....	THE LOFT LIGHTING WORKSHOP
Sound Design	.....	EAMON PICKERING
Set Construction	.....	KEITH BERRY, GRAHAM TAYLOR, RON GREY, RICHARD MOORE, CHARLOTTE CAVANAGH, STEPHANIE QUINN, ANDREW SALMOND, HELEN WALL, SUE HAMILTON
Theatre Technician	.....	SUE HAMILTON
Photographs	.....	CHRISTOPHER BRADBURY
Programme Cover & Poster Design	.....	GUS MACDONALD

Rebecca was full of menace

WITH REFERENCE to your article "Not enough menace in spirited Rebecca" by Charlotte Bevers, page nine, Friday February 23:

I was delighted to be taken at short notice to see "Rebecca" at The Loft Theatre, Leamington on Friday February 23. I came completely fresh to the story, having (I confess) never read the book or seen the film and therefore had no pre-conceived ideas about how it should be performed.

I thoroughly enjoyed the performance, was captivated by the story, the scenery, the costumes, but especially by the superb acting which had me pinned to the edge of my seat.

The rest of the audience also seemed to gasp, giggle and I'm quite certain I heard hissing through teeth at some of the outrageous behaviour of the second Mrs De Winter was faced with.

Imagine, then, my surprise at reading Charlotte Bevers' article, who seemed at pains to dismiss the production with faint praise. I certainly thought that atmosphere was one of the production's strong points, Judy Murdoch's portrayal of the obsessed Mrs Danvers was excellent, but would have been ruined by over-exposure - it was her very "shadowiness" and "almost presence" which worked, so well.

I thought Melissa Bellamy and Stuart Waterworth worked extremely well together, particularly the reversal in their roles as the story progressed.

I thought the production was excellent and naturally had some of the funniest lines. However, no mention was made of Sean Worrell, who perhaps had the most difficult character to por-

tray - lazy, insolent, drunk, but also angry, fiercely loyal to Rebecca and Mrs Danvers and then again full of curiosity and latent menace. I thought Mr Worrell made a very good Jade Favell - he positively made my flesh crawl!

I personally found the production entirely gripping and was completely caught out by the fine scenes at the end. I'm not sure I liked all the smoke and red lighting but it was certainly very effective.

In conclusion then, I seem to disagree very strongly with Charlotte Bevers and found "Rebecca" menacing, thrilling and brilliantly performed and produced. John Fenner should be well pleased with the result of everyone's hard work.

WVIRIAN EVANS,
Green Farm End,
Kineton

Ghostly Rebecca, a hard act to follow

Rebecca, The Loft Theatre until February 24

REBECCA was beautiful and vivacious, the sort of woman who dominates a room as soon as she enters.

A woman whom other women both envy and fear. A woman many men would die for.

One should not speak ill of the dead, but as the plot of Daphne du Maurier's brooding tale unfolds it becomes clear that Rebecca was also a bit of a bitch.

A woman who would, and did, drive a man to murder.

Such was — is — her power that, though dead and unseen hers is the starring role, those whom she left behind having to dance to the heroine's ghostly tune.

Her spirit haunts Mandley and all those who pass through its doors and that spirit is made flesh with every entrance of Mrs Danvers, the housekeeper from hell.

And during the opening night of the Loft Theatre's production of this classic one almost expected the audi-

ence to greet every one of those entrances with a good old pantomime hiss. Like her former mistress, this woman is bad news.

Though the production perhaps lacked a bit of vim director John Fenner and his players neatly capture the mood of the piece and the flavour and mannerisms of the times and were ably led by Stuart Waterworth as the tortured Maxim de Winter and a studied interpretation of Mrs Danvers by Judy Murdoch.

As the on-stage heroine, Melissa Bellamy has the hardest job as the replacement and rather naive, gauche Mrs de Winter who has to walk in Rebecca's dark shadow.

It's a hard act to follow. Nice county set touches from Helen Ashbourne, and Sean Worrell was suitably only as the chance trying to ooze his way into some easy money.

The ending, when Mrs Danvers and Rebecca finally get what's coming to them, was excellently done. —

Martin Lawson.

Not enough menace in Loft's spirited Rebecca

Rebecca - The Loft Theatre, Leamington

It has the makings of the gripping gothic thriller. A house haunted by the spirit of its dead mistress and her formidable living housekeeper. A master who appears to be consumed by love for his lost wife and totally disinterested in his new young wife.

But the Loft's interpretation of the Daphne du Maurier classic Rebecca doesn't quite hit the mark.

The production cannot be faulted for its magnificent acting, spectacular scenery and lavish costumes. But what it does lack is atmosphere.

Judy Murdoch is absolutely excellent as the malevolent Mrs Danvers when she does put in an appearance but the audience does

not see enough of her. More should have been done to make her presence felt.

Stuart Waterworth and Melissa Bellamy also give solid performances as Maxim and the new Mrs de Winter.

But most of the credit must fall to Helen Ashbourne and Bill Bosworth who played the wonderful Beatrice and Giles Lacey with such passion.

Not so much thrilling as entertaining, but nevertheless well worth a visit.

The opening night, last Wednesday, was a gala evening to celebrate the Loft's new heating and air conditioning system. The play ends on Saturday (February 24).

● Melissa Bellamy as Mrs de Winter, Stuart Waterworth as Maxim de Winter and Judy Murdoch as Mrs Danvers. Photo by Marcus Mingins F830298



Thriller lacks passion

REBECCA, Loft Theatre, Leamington, till February 24

☆☆REVIEW☆☆

FIRST-NIGHT nerves played their part in this beautifully staged production in the Loft's new air-conditioned auditorium. A Daphne du Maurier gothic thriller is not my cup of tea but most of the audience seemed absorbed by the growing suspense.

However, this adaptation of the book lacks passion. Judy Murdoch as Mrs

Danvers succeeds in conveying the creeps and Helen Ashbourne lights up the stage as the outspoken Beatrice. Yet the brooding Maxim (Stuart Waterworth) needs to work harder to achieve the shock element at the end of the first act.

The second half does tend to drag but at least you can sit back and admire the scenery.

Barbara Goulden

