



Agatha Christie's ...

An SDC Production

Witness for the Prosecution



A Courtroom Drama

*Directed by
Robin Hirsch*



25th September - 3rd October 1998 at 7.45pm

Sponsored by

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THE LITTLE THEATRE - HOGHTON STREET, SOUTHPORT
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Enjoy tonight's performance.

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Chairman's Letter



Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen to the 1998-1999 season at the Little Theatre. I hope you will enjoy the selection of plays that have been chosen for the coming year.

As you may know we, as the Southport Dramatic Club, are trying to purchase the Little Theatre and we hope to complete the fund raising by the end of the year and with your help our aims could well be achieved.

We are not far from our target and the Club is doing all it can to raise the necessary remaining funds, and we are sure all our loyal supporters will be right behind our efforts.



Courtroom scene



The Prosecuting Counsel at work

Director's Notes



At the beginning of each new Season of Plays at the Little Theatre, there is always an underlying air of excitement and expectation amongst the membership.

What will the opening play be like? What will the season bring? Will we maintain the standards we have reached in the past? Will new talent come to light? What new plays will be released? What revivals are to be considered? Who will be asked to act, direct, stage-manage or "crew"? A hundred and one questions, and opinions, are tossed backwards and forwards between members, at this time every year. The answers are nigh!

We open our season with a play by one of this Century's most popular playwrights - Agatha Christie's well-known favourite "Witness for the Prosecution". I am sure there is something of the armchair detective in all of us and a courtroom drama provides a challenge for actors and audience alike. We hope you, our audiences, will join in our feelings of pleasurable anticipation and that in turn, we provide you with an evening of excitement, intrigue and enjoyment in true Agatha Christie tradition.

Robin Hirsch

Agatha Christie

Born Mary Clarissa Miller in 1890 in Torquay was the daughter of Frederick Alvah Miller, an American from New York who died when she was young. She was then brought up by her English mother, who encouraged her to write poetry, short stories and guided her reading ability.

Her early efforts in writing, which she found difficult at first, have been characterised as sad and sentimental. When she was sixteen, she was sent to Paris to study singing, but since she was very shy and without a strong enough voice for opera, a vocal career was out of the question. She then went to Cairo with her mother and wrote a novel and several short stories, but none were published. During this period she was encouraged by a neighbour, Eden Phillpotts.

In 1912 she became engaged to Colonel Archibald Christie of the Royal Flying Corps and just after the start of the First World War they were married. Whilst her husband was away in France, Mrs Christie worked in the dispensary of the local Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital where she was too busy to write, but made plans to write a detective story.

She wrote much of "The Mysterious Affair at Styles" (her first Poirot story) at odd moments whilst working and completed it during a holiday on Dartmoor. The manuscript was rejected several times, but was finally accepted and Mrs Christie was paid the sum of \$125. But this was enough to give her encouragement to continue as a writer. After completing six books and an anthem of poetry, "The Road of Dreams" (1925), she also had a daughter called Rosalind.

The death of her mother and the impending breakup of her marriage caused the much publicised "disappearance" as a result of amnesia, this brought increased sales, but also notoriety and unpleasantness to Mrs Christie.

After her divorce in 1928 she travelled abroad and in 1930 she met Max Mallowan assistant to the famous archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley - they were married in September that year. They then spent several months each year in Syria and Iraq and whilst she helped her husband with his photography, she also found time to write as there were no distractions. Her novels became best sellers, were serialised in magazines and translated into more than 100 foreign languages. How many books she has sold over the years is for you to guess (1,000,000)?

She also used two pseudonyms - Mary Westmacott and Agatha Christie Mallowan.

She was made a Commander Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1958 and Dame Commander Order of the British Empire (DBE) in 1971 and died in 1976.

“WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION”

by Agatha Christie
Directed by Robin Hirsch

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Greta, Typist to Sir Wilfrid	EMMA GREGSON
Carter, Sir Wilfrid's Chief Clerk	CHARLES PRESTON
Mr Mayhew, a solicitor	JON ELLIS-FOX
Leonard Vole	ALISTAIR HEWITT
Sir Wilfrid Robarts, QC	JOHN SHARP
Inspector Hearne	JOHN McCULLOCH
Plain-Clothes Detective	PETER FORSHAW
Romaine	MARGARET HODGE
Clerk of the Court	IRENE TRIM
Mr Justice Wainwright	BILL BRIGHT
Alderman	BILL FINN
Mr Myers, QC	ARNOLD GORSE
Court Usher	JULIE WHELAN
Court Stenographer	KATE BESWICK
Warder	RODERICK BEARDSSELL
The Judge's Clerk	CHARLES PRESTON
1st Barrister	PETER FORSHAW
2nd Barrister	CHARLES LAWRENCE
1st Member of the Jury	BRIAN FORSHAW
2nd Member of the Jury	ALAN NEWPORT
3rd Member of the Jury	VERA BURNS
4th Member of the Jury	JOAN PETTITT
5th Member of the Jury	ALEC ROBSON
A Policeman	JONATHAN GRIMSHAW
Dr Wyatt, a Police Surgeon	NORMAN HOPE
Janet Mackenzie	BETTY MOOK
Mr Clegg, a Laboratory Assistant	MATTHEW WOODHAMS
The Other Woman	CATHERINE GREENHALGH

THE ACTION TAKES PLACE

ACT ONE - The Chambers of Sir Wilfrid Robarts, QC - afternoon

ACT TWO - The Central Criminal Court, London - better known as The Old Bailey
six weeks later - morning

ACT THREE

Scene 1 The Chambers of Sir Wilfrid Robarts, Q.C., the same evening

Scene 2 The Old Bailey, the next morning

During Act Three, Scene 2, the lights are lowered to denote the passing of one hour.

Time - Autumn and Winter 1956

THERE WILL BE A FULL INTERVAL BETWEEN ACTS I AND II WITH COFFEE AND BAR FACILITIES AND A FIVE MINUTE INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACTS II AND III.

STAGING

Stage Manager	Lindsay Haywood
Assistant Stage Manager (Cast)	Pippa Dunnett
Assistant Stage Manager (Book)	Margaret Jepson
Lights	Harry Jepson
Sound	Roy Carr
Props	Trudi Hirsch
Wardrobe	Jayne Barty
Stage Crew	Nick Evans, Victoria Alcock Nick Murray
Set Built By	Nick Evans, Bill Davies, Roy Carr, Nick Murray, Lindsay Haywood, Harry Jepson, Derek Haywood
Set Designer	Lindsay Haywood
Set Painter	Bob Jessamine

Acknowledgements

Southport Art Centre for loan of Rostra
The Shelbourne Hotel for loan of court chairs

For reasons of public safety we regret that the theatre cannot accept wheelchairs or their occupants. The Management reserves the right to refuse admission to this auditorium, after curtain up, until a suitable opportunity occurs. First aid facilities are provided at this theatre by St. John Ambulance Brigade, whose members give their services voluntarily.

SMOKING IS PROHIBITED IN THE AUDITORIUM.

The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exits and all exit doors will be at that time open. If the public leave in an orderly manner THIS THEATRE CAN BE EMPTIED IN THREE MINUTES OR LESS.

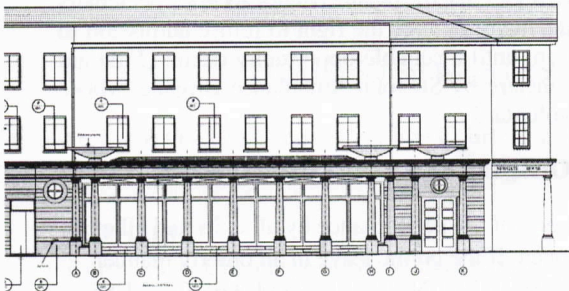
We welcome patrons into our licensed bar which is open before and after each performance.

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Sir Wilfrid Robarts, QC Chambers

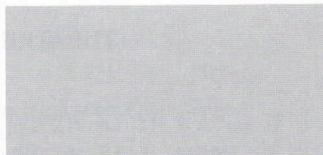


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22nd December–10th January 1999

Nightly at 7.30pm

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22nd–30th January Nightly at 7.45pm

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