

Witness for the Prosecution

A play by Agatha Christie
Performed in November 1996 at Faringdon School

Faringdon Folly

Side by side by Christie

THOSE who migrated with Faringdon Dramatic Society to their latest venue at Faringdon School, will have been impressed by the imaginative way that the new stage layout was handled.

Meeting the demands of the elongated but shallow stage head-on, the players settled for a side-by-side double set for the production of Agatha Christie's 'Witness for the Prosecution'.

This device, and the minimalist but innovative black-and-white chalk design of the sets, soon settled into their rightful place in the background of this riveting production - based on the court case of a man accused of murdering a wealthy maiden lady with whom he made friends.

The cast dealt expertly with the challenges presented by their change of home. Leonard Warner, playing the accused man, Leonard Vole, brought convincing charm to a character whose true personality is saved until the end, and Carolyn Taylor was masterly (misstressly?) as his chilling foreign wife who plays an astonishing game of bluff to achieve her ends.

Special mention should be made of the splendid characterisation squeezed out by Kate Lord from the character of the witness Janet Mackenzie, complete with Edinburgh lilt. Bar the odd momentary lapse in voice projection, she has earned her place as yet another of the major talents to emerge from the Faringdon company.

The other classic performance came from Robert Jennings, a relative newcomer who brought great authenticity and authority to the role of the defending barrister, Sir Wilfred Robarts. David Headey also brought a confident and workmanlike air to his role as prosecutor.

Alan Taylor was a very judge-like judge, overseeing the proceedings which also featured Lucy Walden, Carole Tappenden, Sarah Varnom, Roger Leitch, Walther and Irene Schoonenburg, Jeni Summerfield, Martin Whiffen and Joshua Smith. Debbie Lock as the 'other woman' helped give full dramatic impact to the inevitable twist-in-the-tale.

Ian Smith