

A Murder Is Announced

by Agatha Christie

adapted by Leslie Darbon

24th January -2nd February 2019

I first came across this play when it was performed at Medway Little Theatre – probably more than twenty years ago, although being a Christie fan I was already familiar with the novel. Having enjoyed directing *And Then There Were None* I thought that it was time that Miss Marple had another airing.

The play was adapted from the novel by Leslie Darbon and first presented in 1977, a year after the death of Dame Agatha Christie. The time setting of the play is not well defined in the text, so I decided to set it in 1949, as the novel was first published in 1950.

Avid Christie fans who are familiar with the novel may notice that some of the characters in the book are not present in the play and I am grateful for this, as it has been a challenge to fit all the cast on our stage at times. I don't think that the story suffers from this editing and I hope that you can enjoy this adaptation of the novel as a piece of theatre in its own right. I believe that it remains truer to the original than some of the adaptations of Christie novels that we've seen on our TV screens in recent years.

I wanted to be able to tell you something about the writer Leslie Darbon but I have not been able to unearth much information without contacting the man himself or his agent. He appears to have been a jobbing writer who has written mainly for television. His TV credits include some episodes from *Department S* and the follow-up series *Jason King*, *Shoestring*, *Bergerac* and *Crossroads* amongst others. He collaborated with Richard Harris to write *Two And Two Make Sex* and *Who Goes Bare?*, with Peter Whelan to write *Double Edge* and *A Cold Wind Blowing Up* and with Paul Finney to write *Correspondents' Course*. His most recent play is *Time To Kill*, in 2006. He has also adapted the novel *Cards On The Table* for the stage but *A Murder Is Announced* would seem to be his most popular work. I hope that our production will do it justice.

Chris Hynd, Director

World news from 1949

US President Harry Truman labels his administration the 'Fair Deal'; NATO treaty signed in Washington, D.C.; Mao Zedong establishes the Communist People's Republic of China; Federal Republic of Germany created; Geneva Convention agreed; apartheid begins in South Africa; Britain recognises the independence of the Republic of Ireland; Soviet Union conducts first successful nuclear weapon test - the start of the Cold War.

The arts in 1949

Arthur Miller wins Pulitzer Prize for *Death of a Salesman*; the first soap operas appear in the US; George Orwell's *1984* published; Emmy Awards first presented; Best Picture Oscar goes to *Hamlet*; 45rpm records first sold in the US.



Jez tries the floor for size. Most plays performed at Medway Little Theatre have rehearsals three nights a week for around twelve weeks but do not usually have the luxury of being on the stage until the last few weeks. The set will develop and change throughout those on stage rehearsals, so Noel Coward's advice to actors to 'just say the lines and don't trip over the furniture' is actually pretty sound advice and might have been based on experience.



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Coming Next

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN

by E. Nesbit

Youth Company Production

28th February – 2nd March 2019

Set in and around a country railway station at the turn of the twentieth century, the plight of the railway children grappling with their new environment is imaginatively brought to life for a modern audience while losing nothing of the original spirit of humour, adventure and the final triumph of good over evil.

Medway Little Theatre Needs You!

Our theatre produces several shows a year and we always welcome new members, whether they are interested in acting, stage managing, set building, working lights and sound, or any of the dozens of other jobs needed to produce live theatre. If you are interested in moving from seat to stage, please ask our front of house team or bar staff for information on how to join, or just turn up at one of our social nights, held every Tuesday evening in between show runs. The next one will be on Tuesday 5th February.

This amateur production of *A Murder Is Announced* is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Ltd.

Posters and programmes by Reed Printers of Rochester

Photography by Neil Thorne

A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED
and will take place on Friday
at Little Paddocks at 6.30pm.
Friends accept this, the
only intimation

24th January - 2nd February
Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm

256 High Street, Rochester 01634 400322 www.mlt.org.uk

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is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.