



Love and murder surround Linda Hamilton as Laura in stage revival.

'Laura' Sparkles at Tiffany

Hamilton stresses charm in title role of new production that keeps classic elements intact

Theater Review

There's an inherent risk in reviving a film classic like "Laura" for the stage. The original stars, Gene Tierney and Clifton Webb in particular, left such an indelible impression that any actors trying to fill their shoes are probably going to suffer by comparison.

Linda Hamilton accepts this risk, and even turns it to her advantage, in Lynette McNeill's sparkling production at the Tiffany Theater through Dec. 17. Hamilton illustrates that there's more than one way to play a fascinating woman. Where Tierney gave us Laura Hunt as a ravishing femme fatale shrouded in mystery, Hamilton gives us a genuine charmer - a woman intriguing enough to invite attention, elusive enough to ensure pursuit and smart enough to make it all seem worthwhile. This Laura may not stop you dead in your tracks, but after a few minutes in her company,

you don't want to be anywhere else. "Laura" is a romantic mystery by Vera Caspary and George Sklar about a woman who starts out as a corpse and winds up a suspect in what began as her own murder. Along the way, four men fall in love with Laura, including the detective investigating her supposed murder (Robin Thomas in the Dana Andrews role). The 1947 play differs a bit from the 1944 film (both were based on the earlier novel), but the noirish atmosphere, well-defined characters and haunting David Raksin title song are all intact.

In the juicy Webb role of Waldo Lydecker, Stanley Kamel rises to the occasion. Waldo is the acid-tongued, jealous writer who has helped create Laura. Kamel does a good job conveying Waldo's supercilious surface and the man's perverse inner demons as well. Thomas' hard-boiled, soft-hearted detective and Tom Astor's Shelby Carpenter, Laura's ambiguous fiance, both have an easy, authentic genre

feel. There's not a bit of falloff in the supporting roles, where Myra Turley, Matthew Godfrey and Karen Tarleton each create vivid period portraits.

The exquisite set and interiors, done entirely in blacks, whites, silvers and grays to echo the film's stylish black-and-white look, are from John Iacovelli and Pat Emery, respectively. Dick Magnanti's impeccable costumes and Monique L'Heureux's moody lighting also add to the evening's enjoyment.

— Jay Reiner

LAURA

A Judy Arnold Production

Credits: Playwrights: Vera Caspary & George Sklar; Director: Lynette McNeill; Set: John Iacovelli; Interiors: Pat Emery; Lighting: Monique L'Heureux; Costumes: Dick Magnanti; Sound: Christopher Hardin; Laura theme: David Raksin. **Cast:** Laura Hunt: Linda Hamilton; Waldo Lydecker: Stanley Kamel; Mark McPherson: Robin Thomas; Shelby Carpenter: Tom Astor; Bessie Clary: Myra Turley; Danny Dorgan: Matthew Godfrey; Mrs. Dorgan: Karen Tarleton