

All the good, pretty insects

A BIT like an insect version of Animal Farm the PLOTTERS OF CABBAGE PATCH CORNER, the Christmas offering from Teddington Theatre Club, could be taken either as a light political satire or lots of jolly fun. Or even both.

All the good, pretty insects, like butterflies, are up against the nastier ones, like slugs and greenfly. We were supposed to cheer for the pretty ones but many liked the meanies best.

And with Peter Slater's wonderfully gruesome slug it is easy to see why the baddies were so good.

Peter slithered across the stage looking more like a slug than a slug. He was perfectly horrible.

Lovely

A sadly short, camp cameo from Allen Dickens as the great mushroom caused further merriment. He was like a faded old queen with a head cold. Marvellous.

Plotters was a bit like an allegory of a trades dispute: those who get on with the bosses—in this case the owners of the garden—line up against those who don't.

But in the end they all come together to make the garden pretty again. Ah.

A garden plot

WHY are the insects up in arms in the cabbage-patch? Who are the Big Ones that constantly attack slug, greenfly and maggot? And how will peace be restored in the garden?

This earth-shaking drama of life and death struggles will be played at Hampton Court Theatre (behind the Green) when the Teddington Theatre Club presents David Wood's *Plotters of Cabbage Patch Corner* for eleven performances in December.

Joint direction is by Jeanna Darnell and Bernice Warren (who helps spin the yarn as Spider); the music is played by Diana Smith.

Plotters has been one of the most popular modern plays for children since its first production in 1970, and the attractive songs capture the charm and excitement of this insect world.

The play will run from Friday 6th to Saturday 14th December.

Performances commence at 7.45 pm each evening (Sunday 8th at 6 pm), with Saturday matinees at 2.30 pm on the 7th and 14th December.

Tickets are £2, available to members; Box Office opens on the 25th November. (Telephone: Box Office 01-979-6396; Membership 01-943-3322). The Teddington Theatre Club invite you to join in the plot with "The Plotters of Cabbage Patch Corner."

THE PLOTTERS
OF CABBAGE-
PATCH
CORNER
1985

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ENTERTAINMENT

AMATEUR DRAMA AWARDS

Garden goodies

WITH Christmas almost upon us the local drama groups are in holiday mood with offerings to keep the children quiet for an hour or two.

Teddington Theatre Club have raided the David Wood ragbag and come up with *The Plotters of Cabbage Patch Corner*. First seen in 1970, but new to me, its popularity is assured with another production by a Twickenham group promised for the end of January.

It proves to be a good choice for a juvenile audience, with lots of opportunities to shout out warnings to the goodies and boos to the baddies.

And the Hampton Court Theatre presentation is richly turned out with imaginative costumes and superb settings and lighting — not to mention excellent performances.

And yet . . . surrounded by infants who were obviously enjoying every moment, I somehow didn't like it at all. And I think the reason was its overt political content. It's the political opposite of agitprop — pacification and reassurance.

The setting is a suburban garden where the baddies, Greenfly, Maggot and Slug (a superb characterisation by Peter Slater) are forming a union to go on strike against insecticide sprays — shades of CND.

But they are opposed by a military gent called Red Admiral (another fine characterisation in the hands of Tony Eva), Joan Scarrott's Ladybird, and Barbara Phelps' Bumble Bee, who all play the game with a very straight bat and upperclass accents.

It all works out all right in the end of course, thanks to the defection of Joe Scarrott's scurrying Ant from the baddies to the goodies, and the incompetent niceness of David Helmy's Glowworm.

Allen Dickens does a wise old Mushroom in Frankie Howerd style, and Bernice Warren a Spider. But the most popular children's choice was bovver boy Maggot played with great conviction by Heather Naylor.

The production by Jeanne Darnell and Bernice Warren has been nominated for the RUTAC Amateur Drama Awards. Last performance is tomorrow.

John Thaxter