

COMMUNICATING  
DOORS  
2001

 RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

## Back to the future

ONE of Alan Ayckbourn's most ingenious plots is contained in *Communicating Doors*, directed by Bill Compton for Teddington Theatre Club at Hampton Hill Playhouse last week.

Described as a 'black comedy', it unexpectedly, in some ways, turned out to be more like one of J B Priestley's time plays, except it has a lot more laughs.

An anonymous hotel bedroom suite is the setting. The year is 2019 when evidently there's still a demand for dominatrix-style sex in the shapely form of Phoebe, who wants to be known as Poopay, specialist sexual consultant. She was given a feisty performance by Faye Jamison, impressive in metal-studded black leather, wielding a whip, booted but not spurred.

She is seriously put out when the client, an apparently sick old man, Reece Wells, doesn't want



*Susan Reoch, Heather Hodgson, Faye Jamison*

her usual services, only her signature on his confession to arranged murders (two wives), arms deals and every conceivable kind of crime. She flees and is transported back in time.

In 1994 where she finds herself, there's an encounter with the second wife of Reece, as yet unscathed and Heather Hodgson plays this Ruella as a very cool, imperturbable lady who, in turn, takes a backward journey through the 'communicating doors' and meets his first wife, Jessica,

also a very resourceful young woman, played with zest by Susan Reoch.

Roger Watts made an intimidating hitman, Julian, although his manic laughter at a cornered victim echoed a pantomime villain's.

Still, there were extremely adroit and expertly timed funny performances from the whole cast in this highly engaging production, and a marvellously engineered 'time machine' by Dennis Baker and his crew.

**Jenny Scott**