



[The Dinner Party](#)

by Neil Simon
at Altrincham Little Theatre
Reviewed by [John Waterhouse](#) March 2018

The Dinner Party is a genuinely intriguing play partly because the premise is a very imaginative twist on an old stalwart. A standard Agatha Christie device (a la 'The Mousetrap' and 'Ten Little Indians') finds a random group of essentially middle class individuals all invited to a party by an unseen host and old dirty secrets are gradually unfolded. Interestingly, the playwright

Neil Simon

farced this idea in his screenplay for the film 'Murder by Death'.

With *The Dinner Party* there is no murder mystery; no under-cover murderer or detective masquerades as a guest and no crime has been committed. This does not mean however that the secrets to be unfolded are not of an excruciating nature and that some surprising interpersonal relationships are revealed, making this a complex play which leaves the audience thinking.

The Dinner Party is also a challenging piece because the mood moves markedly from near-farce to almost tragi-drama, and in a play like this careful handling is needed to carry the audience on this emotional rollercoaster. Director **John Chidgey** has moved the play along well without for the most part any loss of pace as the story ebbs and flows between comedy and drama in a genteel backdrop. The background set perfectly complements the mood of middle class respectability, with notable attention having been paid to a pleasing marble effect floor.



The Dinner Party is on at Altrincham Little Theatre until Saturday 24th March.