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"Arsenic and Old Lace"



April 7th, 8th and 9th, 1949

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Being deliberately funny is a serious business. Because of its close relationship to tragedy, humour is always in danger of becoming distasteful or even hurtful, and its successful creation or interpretation calls for a high degree of artistic achievement. The art lies, of course, in knowing intuitively where to draw the line, and the author of our play this evening is a master of this art. In his deft hands a macabre theme becomes a riot.

"Arsenic and Old Lace", sometimes called a comedy, is really a farce. The difference is fundamental, for in comedy, as in more serious drama, one expects a reasonable story; in fact it has been said that the test of a play lies in its credibility. Apply this test to "Arsenic and Old Lace" and the play falls flat on its face, which is just as the author intended, for he relies in no small measure for his effects on the sheer absurdity of his situations. Perhaps this will serve as a timely warning to those who have not as yet been introduced to the Brewster family. Laugh at them by all means—they won't mind in the least—but don't, whatever you do, believe in them for a single moment!

For the actor the playing of farce presents enormous difficulties. The technique is basically different from any other form of dramatic art and, generally speaking, amateurs lack the finesse, the flair, the delicacy of touch which the medium demands. In the full knowledge of this we embark upon our adventure this evening and we invite you to join us in the spirit of goodwill and the readiness to be amused. If we fail we hope you will forgive us and not blame the play. If we succeed we feel sure you will have spent an enjoyable evening. In either case we trust you will not feel it necessary to lock your cellar doors before retiring for the night!

V.W.

"Arsenic and Old Lace"

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

by

JOSEPH KESSELRING.

Characters in order of appearance:

Abby Brewster	EVELYN LIGHTMAN
The Rev. Dr. Harper	ALAN WINTER
Teddy Brewster	HAROLD HERBERT
Officer Brophy	DENZIL GODDARD
Officer Klein	DONALD CAMPBELL
Martha Brewster	NANCY WHITE
Elaine Harper	ELSPETH INGLIS
Mortimer Brewster	JAMES SETTEN
Mr. Gibbs	CYRIL GODDARD
Jonathan Brewster	OLIVER BRISCOE
Dr. Einstein	ROY WINDUS
Officer O'Hara	WINSTON GRIMES
Lieutenant Rooney	PETER REYNOLDS
Mr. Witherspoon	LIONEL PEARSON

The Play produced by VERNON WORKMAN.

The entire action of the Play takes place in the living-room of the Brewster home in Brooklyn.

Time ... ... *The Present.*

ACT I	... ...	An afternoon in September.
ACT II	... ...	That same night.
ACT III Scene 1	... ...	Later that night.
Scene 2	... ...	Early the next morning.

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Scenery Manager ... ... Geoffrey Dabbs

Wardrobe Mistress ... ... Nora Herbert

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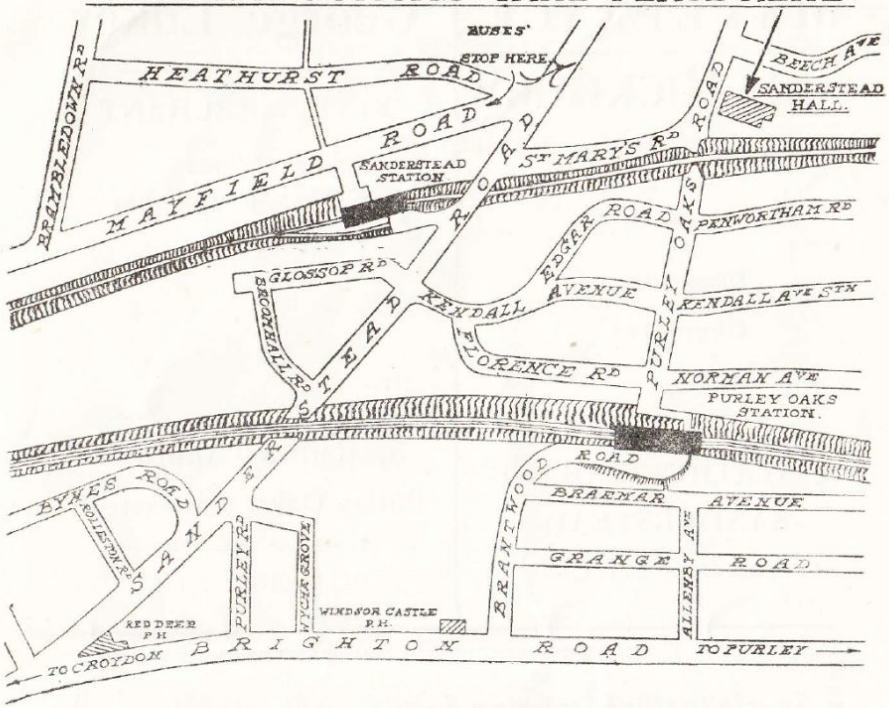
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