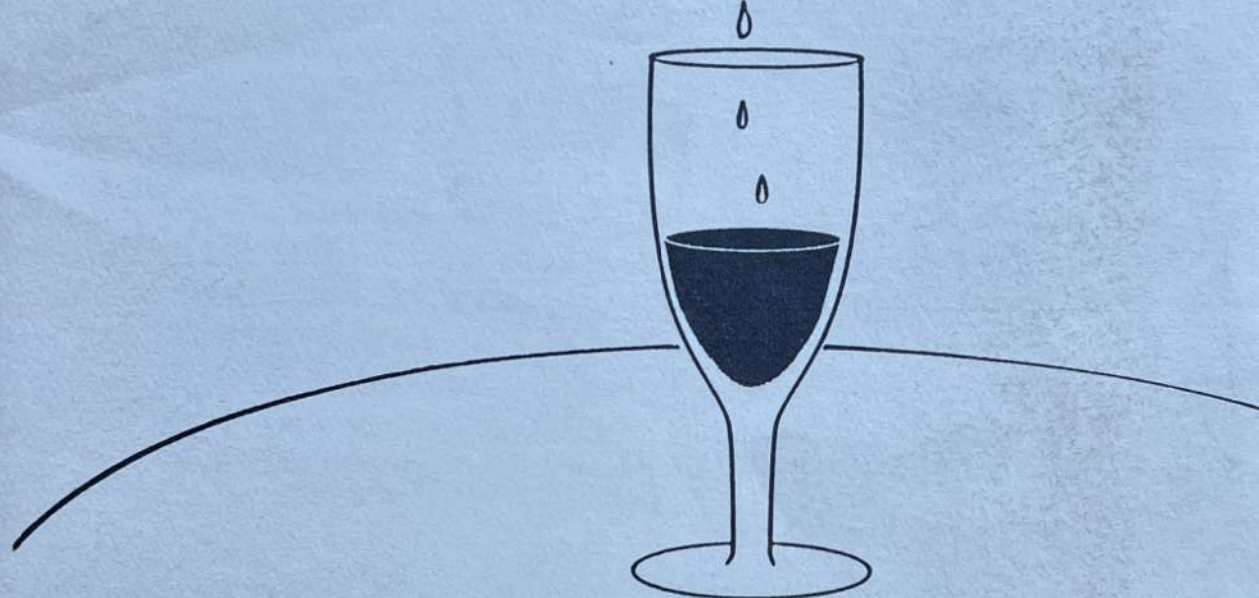


This Side Of The Hill Players
by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc. present

Arsenic



and Old Lace

by Joseph Kesselring
directed by Chuck Danskin

Arsenic and Old Lace



by **Joseph Kesselring**

directed by **Chuck Danskin**

assistant to director/stage manager-**Kathy Heath**

THE CAST

Abby Brewster	Muriel Watkin
Dr. Harper	Al Murphy
Teddy Brewster	Russ Jernigan
Officer Brophy	Andrew Millar
Officer Klein	Larry Bostow
Martha Brewster	Jackie Thomas
Elaine Harper	Leslie Devlin
Mortimer Brewster	Mark Heath
Mr. Gibbs	Roger Gillette
Jonathan Brewster	David Keane
Dr. Einstein	Ronald Fernandez
Officer O'Hara	Robert Rogers
Lt. Rooney	Stan Aitken
Mr. Witherspoon	Paul Anable
Mr. Hoskins	Ron Thomas
Mr. Spenalzo	Karen Keane

The entire action of the play takes place in the living room of the
Brewster home in Brooklyn. Time: 1941

ACT I

An afternoon in September.

..... 15 Minute Intermission

Please join us in the lobby for refreshments.

ACT II

That same night.

ACT III

Scene 1: Later that night.

Scene 2: Early the next morning.



The Crew

Director	Chuck Danskin
Asst. to the Director/Stage Manager	Kathy Heath
Lighting Design	Ron Thomas
Set Design	Chuck Danskin
Set Decor/Props	Bev Engel, Chief; Joy Wead, Mary Danca, Ryan Mock, Su Sunday
Costume Design	Muriel Watkin
Costume Construction	Candy Plato
Costumes	Gail Clark
Makeup/Hair	Mitzi Glasson
Sound Tech.	Carole Farrell
Lighting Tech.	Margaret Harris
Gala	Martha Jacobsen, Shelly Wolf, Ralph Coons, Andrew Millar, Susan Shapira, Sandy and Paul Obester, Jackie Samoluk
Front of House/Hospitality	Stan Aitken
Program Design	Bruce Marion
Poster Design/Illustration	Bruce Marion
Advertising Director	Al Rose
Play Program Manager	Melissa Rey
Play Program Ad Sales	Robert Rogers
Photographer	Michael Wong
Set Construction	Dave Johansen, Chief; David Harvey, Mark and Kathy Heath, Larry and Sandy Bostow, Larry Mohr, Sherry Hartwig, Tom and Julia Woosnam, Dick Engel, Dan Hertz, Paul Anable, Chuck and Marianna Danskin Cathy McNeal, Roger Gillette
Ushers	Charles White, Brenda White, Don Hillier, Ralph Coons, Susan Bassin, Richard Bassin, Dick Engel, Sue Murphy, Cate Callanta, Lennon Smith, Sherry Hartwig, Sue Hertz, Melissa and Jim Rey, Bruce Spring, Penny Patterson, Tom and Julia Woosnam, Ron Gould, Jennifer Gould
Hospitality	Gail Clark, Marjorie Black, Sue Heckman, Mary Danca
Box Office	Betty Ralphs, Eileen Nonneman, Connie Thompson, Cheryl Sinclair

'Arsenic' opens Mello theater

The new Mel Mello Center for the Arts debuts Thursday evening when This Side of the Hill Players opens the well-loved stage and screen comedy classic "Arsenic and Old Lace" by Joseph Kesselring.

The play "is one of those that I, and it seems like many other people, don't get tired of," says Russ Jernigan, who portrays irrepressible Teddy Brewster.

Neither should audiences, watching the lightheartedly macabre goings-on in the genteel Brewster home from the spacious new Center's 126 plush red seats. The Brewster sisters Abby and Martha (Muriel Watkin, Jackie Thomas) practice a peculiar brand of philanthropy: permanently curing their elderly boarders' loneliness with their homemade — and lethal — elderberry wine.

"What they do, they do very innocently," says Watkin. "They're sweet little old ladies who think they're doing the right thing."

Sharing the Brewster home is nephew Teddy (Jernigan), a "sweet loveable teddy bear of a guy who happens to want to believe he's Theodore Roosevelt" by lustily blowing on his bugle, charging with drawn sabre up the stairs, and conveying his aunts' victims to "Panama" — the Brewster cellar. And nephew Mortimer (Mark Heath), the theatre critic who stumbles upon his aunts' habit by discovering a body in the window seat.

Enter the sinister third nephew, Jonathan (David Keane), fresh from a binge of mayhem with a body of his own, and his quaking sidekick Dr. Einstein (Ronald Fernandez), seeking asylum while Einstein performs cosmetic surgery on Jonathan. His previous attempt left Jonathan looking like Boris Karloff (who originally performed that role, written for him), which is too handy for pursuing police.

Consequently Mortimer tries to persuade his aunts to change their ways, to field the police inquiries as they respond to complaints about Teddy's bugle, to tangle with Jonathan and to reassure his loving but utterly confused fiancée Elaine (Leslie Devlin).

Completing the play's rich cast of characters are Al Murphy as Dr. Harper, Elaine's minister father who looks askance at Mortimer's job; Roger Gillette as elderly Mr. Gibbs, whom the charitable aunts woo with elderberry wine; and Paul Anable as Mr. Witherspoon of Happy Dale Sanitarium. Ron Thomas and Karen Keane portray the deceased Mr. Hoskins and Mr. Spenalzo respectively.

Portraying a small army of typical New York police are Andrew Millar as Off. Brophy, Larry Bostow as Off. Klein, Stan Aitken

as the hard-nosed Lt. Rooney and Robert Rogers as the "jolly Irish" Off. O'Hara, who ignores his duties to assail Mortimer with his playwriting efforts.

First opening on Broadway in August, 1941, "Arsenic" was Kesselring's major success, and is listed in "Greatest American Plays of the 1940s" and other anthologies. "This one just has the charm that audiences then were looking for . . . and remains as charming today," says director Chuck Danskin. "There's definite comedy, some element of mystery, and an element of drama."

It opens the Mel Mello Center quite well, with its comedic appeal and two-story set, a Players' first that "allows the play to live properly," Danskin says.

To commemorate the Coast-

side's new performing arts center, a gala reception will follow the opening-night performance in the hospitality room, which will resemble the Brewster cellar, complete with plaques bearing the names of the 13 gentlemen who sampled elderberry wine.

"Arsenic and Old Lace" will run on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. through March 6 at the Mel Mello Center, at 1167 Main Street, Half Moon Bay. Ample parking is available around the building, and the 126-seat house includes four disabled-seating spots. Tickets are available at the regular box offices at Bay Book Company and the Peggy Eriksen Gallery, and at the door. MasterCard and VISA are welcome. For further information, contact the Players at 726-0998.



Michael Wong

The Brewster sisters Martha and Abby (Jackie Thomas, Muriel Watkin) woo Mr. Gibbs (Roger Gillette) in This Side of the Hill Players' newest production, 'Arsenic and Old Lace.'

'Arsenic' laced with laughs

By EMMA LITTLE
Special to the Review

This Side of the Hill Players' premiere performance at the Mel Mello Center for the Performing Arts opened Thursday to an excited, near-capacity audience. It was evident from the start that many attended as much to view the new theater as to enjoy the performance.

The troupe's current offering is Joseph Kesselring's classic, *Arsenic and Old Lace* staged on an absolutely gorgeous set designed by Chuck Danskin, who also directs this tried and true comedy about two charming spinsters who engage in a rather unconventional form of philanthropy.

The incredible amount of intelligent and creative dedication to the construction of the theater as a fully functional, lively and professional venue is evident and lends polish, confidence and style to the production.

Muriel Watkin portrays Abby Brewster with delightful grace and good humor. Jackie Thomas is equally engaging as Abby's sister, Martha. The two women are lovely together and quite convincing. The part of Reverend Harper is nicely turned by Al Murphy, and Mark Heath, as Mortimer Brewster, displays some fine moments of horrified fascination and genuine befuddlement.

While Ronald Fernandez and Robert Rogers, as Officer O'Hara and the demented Dr. Einstein respectively, turn in strong and well-timed performances, their efforts are hobbled by ill-defined, cumbersome accents. Officer O'Hara's soliloquies sounds like a tour of the United Kingdom's empires, beginning in Ireland,



Dean Drumheller / Review

Director Chuck Danskin applies some last-minute makeup to a "dead" Mr. Spenalzo played by Karen Keane at a performance last weekend.

going through Liverpool, back to Bombay, and then down to Australia.

Dr. Einstein, on the other hand, sounds as if he gleaned his speech patterns from spending a six-week intensive with Dr. Ruth, Robin Leach and Arnold Schwarzenegger on a kibbutz. It is unfortunate that the otherwise fine comic timing of both performers was so detracted from by feckless accents.

Commentary regarding speech

patterns aside, *Arsenic and Old Lace* is a fine effort. One hopes that with the newly acquired permanent and professional venue for its work, the troupe will undertake some riskier, more contemporary material.

Arsenic and Old Lace runs Thursday-Saturday nights through March 6. Tickets are available at the Peggy Eriksen Gallery, 726-1598, or by calling the theater at 726-0998.