

Farmington Players

Off with the old, on with the new

Editor's note: Pat Bordman concludes her series on community theater, following off-stage and on-stage goings on of Farmington Players through their production of 'Angel Street.'

By PAT BORDMAN

The coal scuttle was in the right place, the Early American chest of drawers looked remarkably Victorian

and the couch held up through the entire run of "Angel Street."

Some lines were flubbed, some forgotten, and there was even some ad-libbing done when the bell pull fell down unexpectedly. But the play was warmly received and played with intensity by the actors.

Ron Turek's "Mr. Manningham" was so evil, the audience hissed and booed. Sandy Diltrich's "Mrs. Manningham" was so believable one wanted to rush

on stage to her defense. Both were so convincing in their roles the audience felt more like participants than spectators.

'This time tomorrow there'll be a bare stage. Monday the chalk goes on the floor so rehearsals can begin for the next play.'

—Don Briggs

The supporting roles of Carol Green, as Elizabeth and Sand Rotenberg as Nancy added nuances. Though Elizabeth appeared only for brief moments on stage, some of her facial expressions left lasting impressions.

Nancy's coquettish impudence and the love scene between Nancy and Mr. Manningham came off admirably due to skillful interpretation.

RUFF, played by C. M. Novess, provided brief comedic reprieves as the perfect concerned, clever, slightly aloof detective.

Ed Keller's walk-on role as the policeman must be mentioned conveying the toughness of an officer with speaking a word. It was his first appearance on the Farmington Players stage.

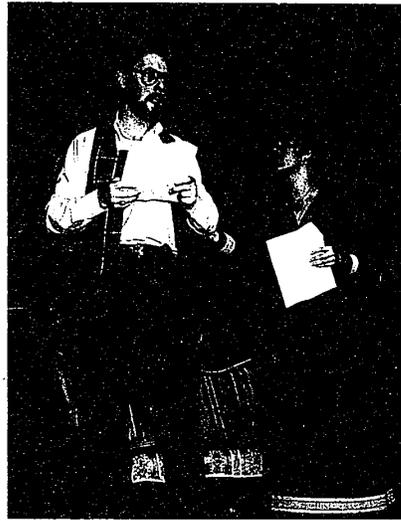
What the audience saw in the finished product was a long process of planning, imagination, timing and nerves. Each element fits together. No one aspect overpowered another.

Though a great performance may stand alone, the various shades of meaning in the script would be lost if furniture, color, make up and lighting was out of place. The able crew pulled it off without an error.

It is estimated that for every one person on stage there are five off-stage acting as support. "Angel Street" had only six characters, but there was 37 individuals off-stage to make the whole production happen.

There were no checks handed out on closing night. The players do what they do for fun, excitement, and companionship.

Even so, the last curtain does not signal the last performance. Closing night represents the last efforts before a



Phil Hadley, who wielded the lighting board for 'Angel Street' and Elaine Wilson, who was props chairman for the play, turn actor and actress in a spoof the crew staged for Farmington Players. The spoof is the bittersweet farewell to cast and crew who have completed a job well done, and maybe the last time they will ever work together. (Photo by Pat Bordman)

large audience. And so, to soften the poignant time when the crew might work together for the very last time, they give a spoof of the play for themselves.

AS IN ANY spoof, the characters actions were over emphasized, some outrageous. Mrs. Manningham's bun became a sexy fall. Nancy turned heavy with child. Mr. Manningham's lost wife made an appearance, and so did a parade of seductive women who represented his conquests.

After the spoof came the thank-yous. All of the crew is called by name onto the stage, and for perhaps the first time they hear applause for their efforts.

Then come the gifts to the director, stage manager, producer and assistant director.

One gift was the large letter A on a string, a local joke stemming from the time no A could be found for the marriage.

Another gift was a ruby pin, stemming from the lead character's frustration in trying to locate a stash of rubies.

A bittersweet moment for all of the players.

Director Ellie Jorgensen said she didn't know what she was going to do with all of her time now that the play is over. C. M. Novess finds closing night "a depressing time."

Ron Turek was headed for publicity shots to be made for his next play. Ms. Diltrich said she is glad to return to a normal life.

"I'm a little relieved," said the female lead who confessed it might take three-four hours for her to settle down after the intensity of play night.

PERHAPS MS. Rotenberg summed up the actors feelings best.

"It's really mixed feelings. In some ways I'm glad it's over. It's time to go on to something else. But there's lots of things to miss. The people around. Yet I'm looking forward to the next play."

Don Briggs, stage constructor, said, "This time tomorrow there'll be a bare stage. Monday the chalk goes on the floor so rehearsals can begin for the next play."

Casting is completed now for "Armenic and Old Lace," with opening night set for Friday, May 2.

A new group of actors will be warning each other, "Don't whistle in the dressing rooms."



Ron Turek adjusts his Victorian vest in preparation to saying his lines as Mr. Manningham in Farmington Players' production of "Angel Street" for the last time. Turek has already been cast for another play in downtown Detroit. (Photo by Pat Bordman)

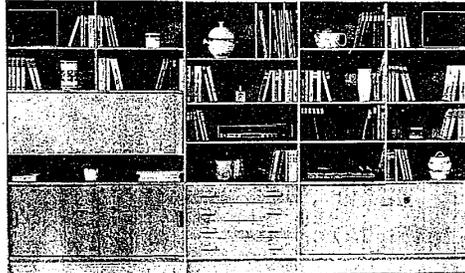


Mel pays a visit

Vic Tayback, also known as Mel, the short-order cook on TV's "Alice" series, visits Hudson's stores Tuesday on behalf of Kelly Services' latest venture in the culinary world, the publication of "Recipes for Busy People." The

cookbook, published by Warner Books, is composed of recipes for working women. The TV actor will be in the book departments of Hudson's downtown store at noon and in the Fairlane store at 7 p.m.

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