High-spirited players offer mystery musical

Forget about the butler — he's the first to be done away with in "Something's Afoci."
This spoof, reminiscent of "Ten Little Indians," was written by James McDonald, Robert Gerlach and David Vos. The Birmingham Village Players production captures the spirit of high nonsense the authors intended. "Something's Afoci." continues at 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday at the playhouse on the corner of Chestnatt and Hunter.

Director Arnold Bernstein and his

nunter.
Director Arnold Bernstein and his east treat us to a round of murders that would have made Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle and Will Shakespeare dizzy.

AT TIMES I had the wild feeling that Bernstein had listened to the same im-plausible radio mysteries that mesmer-ized me as a child whenever I stayed home from school. Caretakers, saucy maids, dissolute nephews, Englishmen from India, Wilkie Collins characters

review

who live on sherry turn up in this mur-der mystery musical that augurs good things for the village players' 1980-81

things for the vinings players 1 900-01

A lot of hard work has gone into this procuction and the result is an enjoyable evening of clever dialogue and funny songs.

The action takes place on (of course)

The action takes place on (of course) a great country estate called Hancour's Retreat. Susan Beck, who has a terrific volce, plays the innocent love-child and heroine, Hope Landgon, with sweet perjective, Ms. Beck sings at tribute to the "lovely atmosphere" of the house just before people begin dying in droves.

Ms. Beck is great in the love duets with the college man. Don't ask me to explain where he came from!

Ann Sala is very lively as Lettie, the greedy, saucy maid. Ms. Sala exclaims "Koo"; among other Eliza Doulittle cockney-isms, with terrific fervor. Ms.

SOMEHOW IT ALL makes sense

SOMEHOW IT ALL makes sense when a recording pool of from behind a portrait, asks if we want an explanation, and says, "Turn me over," and never does finish explaining.

None of the six characters invited to dinner eats anything during the 24 hours spent in Rancour's Retreat. The dinner guests manage tea, and sherry of course. This makes sense too. Clive, the butler, energetically played by Jim Masters, gets his as he is announcing dinner. Was he the only one who knew where dinner was kept? Flint, the caretaker, "the gripper" (he likes to pinch ladies), is done in by the gas oven. Flint is portrayed by Don Brown.

John Unruh is wonderful as the disso-

going to tell you how he gets it. I so enjoyed Unruh's toothy grin, his Valen-tino sneer and limber leaps. I was sorry to see him dragged into the library and

to see him dragged into use not as; and to his doom.

Maureen Cook is wonderful as Miss Tweed, "the tweedy, elderly amateur detective." Ms. Cook toasts the sunset with Ovaltine — the only guest with the sense to partake of nourishment.

SHE STRIDES about with the vigor of a staunch feminist, finding clues everywhere, announcing that she has "always been partial to revenge, passion, lust and greed" as possible motives. Ms. Cook's elocution and "hip-hip-horrah" manner are right on taraet

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John Unruh is wonderful as the dissolute repetable when ton finding his uncle's uncle's will. He finds it, and — no, I'm not til she runs into her old lover. Then she

suddenly reverts to perfectly understandable English. Since Lady Grace is
French by birth, I suppose this makes
sense.

Ms. Benson delivers a torchy song,
and a neat exchange of lines with Col.
Gillweather. He says, "Good night."
be says, "There was a child." He says,
"Dudley?" She says, "Yours." And so
"Dudley?" And She says, "Yours." And so
"Dudley?" She says, "Yours." And so
"Dudley?" And so

burn. Don Schore has wonderful in moments as "the Juvenile." He's the scollege man who arrives in the rain, announcing, "Oh, drat, my lettah's running." All his shirts have large athletic letters across his broad chest. Schore does a nice number, "Don't know whit Turst yoe, but I do," with Ms. Beck.

No, I'm not giving the ending away. You wouldn't do," with Ms. Beck.

No, I'm not giving the ending away. You wouldn't lod," with Ms. Beck.

No, I'm not giving the ending away. The set by Dick Wagner and large technical tricks follow one nather fast and furiously and are eleverly done. Lighting by Sandra Perkins was fine. The portrait over the fireplace by Doug Parrish was properly sinister.

Joan Bowes on piano, Carl Stewart on percussion and Eleanor Strube on bass do the job of a full orchestra very well. Even the musicians die in this production. Oh well, go see it. I couldn't possibly explain the plot to any sensible person.

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a narrator are needed, for afternoon rehearsals. The show will be presented on Nov. 1 at The Community House in



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