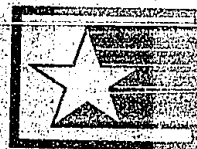


Entertainment

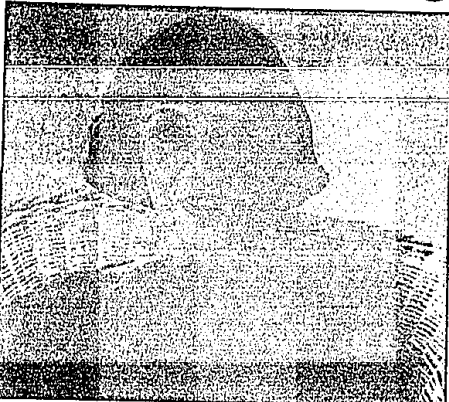
Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100

Thursday, May 3, 1984 O&E



(O11C)

Spunky Imogene Coca heads fine cast



Imogene Coca plays an Agatha Christie-style detective in the mystery musical "Something's Afoot" at the Birmingham Theatre.

Performances of the musical "Something's Afoot" continue through Sunday, May 27, at the Birmingham Theatre, 211 S. Woodward. For ticket information call 644-3333.

"Something's Afoot," the musical murder mystery spoof at the Birmingham Theatre, is occasionally clever and often outrageously silly. The talented cast makes the most of this light and fluffy bit of theatrical whimsy.

Agatha Christie fans will immediately recognize the classic setting: an old assortment of guests and servants assembled for a weekend at an English country estate in the 1930s. They are cut off from civilization by a raging storm, their host fails to appear, and one by one they are polished off by a fiendishly clever murderer.

Headlining the show is veteran comedienne Imogene Coca as Miss Tvede, the elderly and eccentric amateur detective so beloved in British murder mysteries. Coca's indefatigable spunk is best exemplified in the number "Carry On" as she encounters the other frightened females to show their mettle. Grabbing a spear from the heavily armed walls of Rancour's Retreat, she becomes a major force.

Coca also bubbles through the title song and leads "Suspicious," in which everyone points an accusing finger at everyone else, and "I Owe It



Barbara Michals

All," which unabashedly acknowledges the plot's indebtedness to Christie and some of her famous cohorts.

KIM CROSBY as Hope, the ingenue, and Brian Quinn as Geoffrey, the juvenile lead, make an engaging pair. Their song-and-dance duet "I Don't Know Why I Trust You (But I Do)" is an amusing parody of the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers routines. Both move gracefully, and Crosby's vocal skills are impressive.

As the "grande dame" Lady Grace Manley-Prouse, Lucille Patton brings laughs as she pretentiously slaughters French or rams her way through "The Man With the Ginger Moustache."

Mark Basile is appropriately oily as Nigel Rancour, Lord Rancour's disolute nephew and hopeful heir.

Ginger Prince is perfect as the saucy maid Lottie, replete with little squeals and Cockney

touches as well as rampant sex appeal. Along with the steely caretaker Flint (Joe Barrett), she belts out "Problematical Solution" as the two plot their escape from the deadly Rancour's Retreat.

David Sablin's Col. Gilweather seems the epitome of the sensible old Army man, and David Goulet is adequate as Dr. Grayburn, the family doctor. Martin Walsh is nicely haughty as Clive the butler, proving the old adage about the bigger they are, the harder they fall when he takes a spectacular tumble.

WHILE THE audience is asked not to reveal the requisite surprise ending, it is safe to say that the buller did not do it, as he has an early demise.

Director and choreographer Charles Abbott keeps everything running smoothly. Gary Decker's set design is handsome, and the various props used as murder devices go off without a hitch.

'Pajama Game' keeps players in high spirits

Performances of the Farmington Players production of the musical "The Pajama Game" continue Thursday-Sunday, May 3-5, 10-12, and Thursday-Saturday, May 17-19, at the Farmington Players Barn Theatre, 3232 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. For ticket information call 555-6822.

By Barbara Michals
special writer

Despite its tongue-in-cheek asser-

tions of carrying weighty messages about capitalism and labor relations, "The Pajama Game" is a good, old-fashioned, fun musical. The current production by the Farmington Players is a spirited rendering of this longtime favorite.

In a small Midwestern town in the 1950s, the new superintendent at the Sleep-Tite Pajama Factory falls in love with a member of the union grievance committee. When the workers eventu-

ally go on strike over a 7 1/2-cent hourly

pay hike, the lovers are divided by their loyalties.

Jim Austin is likeable as Sid, the superintendent whose strong sense of fair play leads him to investigate the company's profits. He ends the strike by exposing the factory president's financial double dealing.

Though Austin falters on his first song, "A New Town Is a Blue Town," he warms on numbers like the rousing "There Once Was a Man" and the haunting ballad "Hey There."

JULIE AUSTIN is well-cast as Babe, the spunky union member who won't back down on her principles, even for

the man she loves. Her pleasant singing voice works well in the lively numbers, "I'm Not at All in Love" and "Seven and One-Half Cents," plus the duet "There Once Was a Man" and the reprise of "Hey There."

Lon Emmert is masterfully funny as Hines, the company's efficiency expert. A former professional knife-thrower, Hines is a force to be reckoned with whenever his flirtatious girlfriend arouses his jealousy. Emmert's expressive face seems in perpetual motion, and his eyes convey so much they almost deserve separate billing.

Emmert's tremendous talent turns "I'll Never Be Jealous Again" into a

review

comic gem, as Hines tries to wrestle with his rampant emotions. In "Think of the Time I Save," he merrily pokes fun at his own penchant for efficiency and such time-savers as sleeping with his clothes on and shaving in bed.

As Mabel, the object of Hines' affections, Lori Tupper is delightfully saucy,

belting out "Steam Heat" or calling Sid to "Hernando's Hideaway." Her comedic timing nicely complements Emmert's.

Jack Gruika is appealing as the irrepressible womanizer Prez, the union

Continued on Proceeding Page

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