

Troy Players keep suspense in 'The Mousetrap'

By JEFF SCHORR

The Troy Players take a big bite out of a classic murder mystery, Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap," and chew on it pretty well.

This quintessential whodunit — a small group of varied personalities, snowed-in and isolated from help, the phone line cut and a killer in the group — was one of Mrs. Christie's favorites. It has become one of the world's as well.

"The Mousetrap" first opened in London in the early '50s. As a gift to her nephew, Mrs. Christie directed all proceeds to go to him. Film rights to the play were sold but under the condition these not be exercised until six months after "The Mousetrap" closed. It is still running — the longest running play ever.

While each of the eight actors in the Troy Players cast does a creditable job, Phillip Jakey, in the unlikely role of Christopher Wren, and Shirley Biggs as Mrs. Boyle seem to get into their roles the best.

Review

JAKEY PLAYS a fidgety, effeminate, eccentric and slightly strange young man whose actions and opinions make him an immediate — if too obvious — candidate as the murderer. The bitchy, blue-blooded, nothings-good-enough-for-me Mrs. Boyle also offers a definable character and Mr. Biggs is up to it. Both voices come through clear and to the point.

On a winter night in a village 30 miles from London, novice innkeepers Mollie and Giles Rawlson (Dawn Langlois and Charles Rawlson) prepare for their first guests in their new boarding-house venture, in the midst of a building snowstorm. They have, of course, never met the guests who have made reservations by mail.

The four expected — and unexpected — guests arrive, one by one, as the ra-

dio in the background informs us that a murder has been committed in the neighborhood.

In addition to Christopher Wren and Mrs. Boyle, a retired army career man, Major Metcalf, and a young, world traveler, Miss Caswell, are the other expected arrivals. Mr. Paravicini is the unexpected one. Detective Sergeant Trotter who arrives on skis at snowed-in Monkswell Manor in the second scene the next day, completes the assemblage.

As the plot is fleshed out, the audience gradually discovers Mrs. Christie at her best in suggesting that things are not what they seem on the surface. Everyone is hiding something or is someone else.

MAJOR METCALF, who would appear to be the only stable, non-eccentric among the cast, is appropriately presented by Ted Henley. The role of Miss Caswell, who has an unhappy childhood, we learn, to account for her

unhappiness, is taken by Mary Ann Ducharme. She does well with her few opportunities to emote.

Todd Curless plays the strange Mr. Paravicini who is always laughing up his sleeve at people and circumstances. He brings a certain, Omar Sharif-like assurance to the role but lacks the extra measure of punch to put it across. Jack Prokop plays a very proper, business-like, scolding but believable — if young — gendarme.

The host and hostess parts anchor the play. They help as foils as we learn about the characters early. Dawn Langlois plays her part well, though it is a difficult one as she must let her emotions carry her away. Charles Rawlson also plays his role well as he gives vent to the everyman's (audience) reaction to the strange people around him.

However, his words get lost from time to time, and in a period of agitation, he sues furiously on his pipe when it would seem more appropriate

to merely flail his arms and hold onto the pipe.

"The Mousetrap" continues Friday

and Saturday, May 18 and 19, at 8:30 p.m. at Troy's Larson Middle School off Long Lake just east of John R.

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