

Southport Dramatic Club

presents

The Odd Couple

by **Neil Simon**

18th to 26th April 1980

Nightly at 7.45

Also at
Bingley Little Theatre
on Sunday, 4th May
1980



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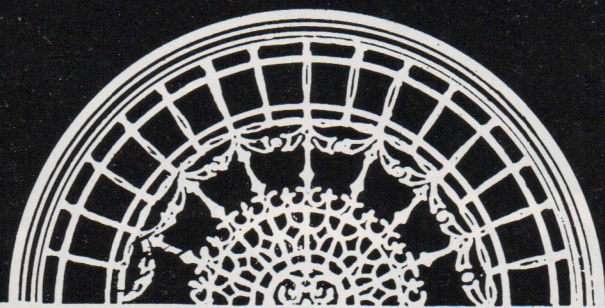
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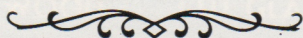
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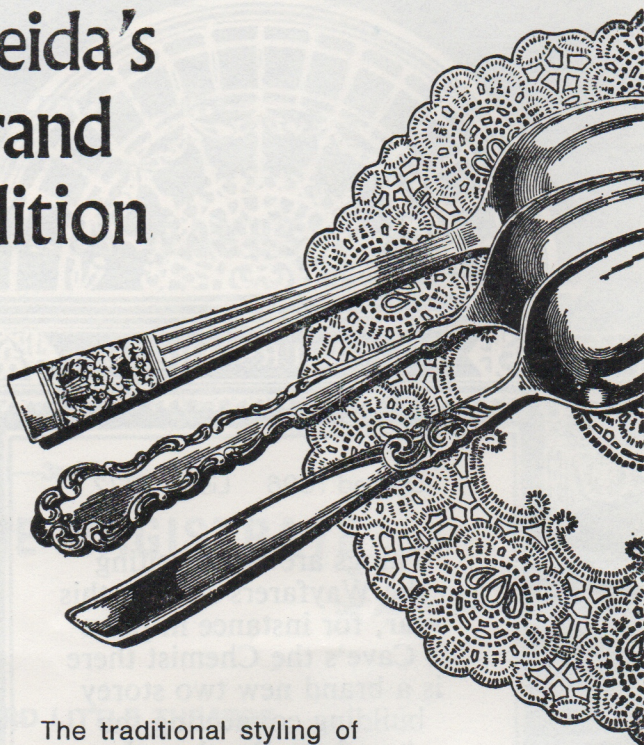
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A Garrick Players Production

16th to 24th May

A PENNY FOR A SONG

by John Whiting

Directed by Don Anderson

An S.D.C. Production

21st July — 2nd August

SEE HOW THEY RUN

by Philip King

An S.D.C. Production

We are pleased to announce that the work of re-locating the Wardrobe Hire Department is now complete and we are able to commence the hire of costumes again.

On Thursday of each week the Wardrobe Hire Department will be open from 8.00 pm to 9.30 pm to anyone who wishes to hire costumes.

We apologise to the inconvenience the closure has caused, but the new arrangements should provide a quicker, more efficient Hire Department.

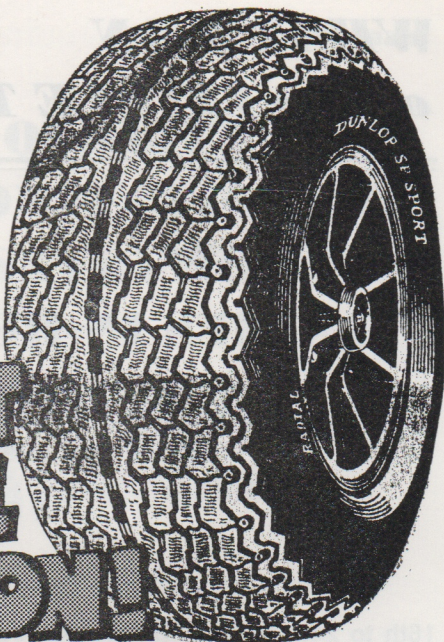
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Champagne Gala Night

Thursday, 15th May 1980

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Special performance of

A PENNY FOR A SONG

by John Whiting

Directed by Don Anderson

at 8.00 pm

AFTER-SHOW SUPPER DANCING UNTIL 1.00 am

Tickets: £6.00

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THEATRE IN SOUTHPORT

PART V — THE WAR YEARS AND AFTER

SHEFFIELD REPERTORY COMPANY

The Second World War provoked an upheaval in the theatre everywhere. In fact, as my last article pointed out, the theatrical situation in Southport was already rather gloomy, but across the Pennines, in Sheffield, the war disrupted a successful season and the closure of the Playhouse left the Company homeless. In the end, the combination of Sheffield personnel and Southport premises (i.e. the 3 year old Little Theatre) provided the Playhouse Company with continuous employment whilst supplying this town with first class repertory theatre.

Things did not go smoothly at first, for the Sheffield players encountered the usual Southport apathy, but gradually, encouraged by various enthusiastic members of the S.D.C., public support increased and the Company stayed until the end of the war. At their final performance on October 12th, 1946, the Chairman of the S.D.C., Dr. A. Wilkinson, spoke of the town's gratitude for what the Sheffield Company had done. "Their work," he said, "had been an inspiration and they would leave a great impression. Southport had now got the repertory habit."

SOUTHPORT REPERTORY COMPANY

The gap left by their departure was soon filled by the formation of the first permanent, professional repertory company. Under the chairmanship of Raymond Richards, with Herbert Prentice as director and Lionel Harris as producer, the Southport Repertory Company was incorporated as a non-profit making concern, depending for its finances on patrons, subscribers and the box office. Initially it planned to use the Little Theatre for a summer season and, during the winter, to tour North-West towns that lacked theatres of their own.

The Company opened at the Little on 5th April, 1947, with a production of Wilde's 'An Ideal Husband.' In the souvenir programme the Mayor, James Peet, wrote optimistically: "Fifty years hence, I believe my successor in this office will be called upon to speak at the Jubilee performance of the Southport Repertory Company and that he will be able to look back over an unbroken succession of seasons to this, the first performance."

Unhappily, his prognosis was to prove over-optimistic. The Company spent several summers at the Little, touring during the winter months, but returning to Southport to present a pantomime at Christmas. Then, in 1953, they found a home of their own at the Scala Theatre. This building had had a chequered career. Built originally as the Winter Gardens Pavilion, in 1906 it had become the Albert Hall (a variety theatre), then the Empire (showing 'animated pictures' in the afternoons and, presumably, variety shows in the evenings), then the Empire Super Cinema, then the Scala Super Cinema and, finally, the Scala Theatre. The Repertory Company spent the last 9 years of its existence here. Their last presentation was of Philip King's 'As Black As She's Painted.' At the last night, on 22nd January, 1962, Vint Graves commented, that if all the people in the audience that night had shown interest before, closure might not have been necessary. As it was, Southport had not shown sufficient interest in its repertory company, so the company disbanded and the Scala was pulled down.

In the years since, there have been two major developments. On 23rd May, 1973 the Southport Theatre was opened as the town's centre for light entertainment. And on 21st September, 1974 the Southport Arts Centre (converted from the Cambridge Hall) opened, offering a varied programme of concerts, plays, films and children shows.

However, no account of the theatrical history of Southport would be complete without mentioning the Southport Dramatic Club, so a history of the club will be found in the gala programme of this, its Diamond Jubilee season.

18th to 26th April, 1980

The Odd Couple

by Neil Simon

Directed by **Thelma Falls-Hand**

CAST (In order of appearance)

Speed **David Charters**

Murray **Len Brindley**

Roy **Doug Linsley**

Vinnie **Mike Rogerson**

Oscar Madison **Marcus Walker**

Felix Ungar **Brian Tooley**

Gwendoline Pigeon **June Evans**

Cecily Pigeon **Val Pedlar**

Scene is an apartment on Riverside Drive, New York City

ACT I

A hot summer night

ACT II

Scene 1 Two weeks later about 11.00 pm

Scene 2 A few days later about 8.00 pm

ACT III

The next evening about 7.30 pm

There will be **TWO INTERVALS** of approximately 15 minutes each

STAGE STAFF

Stage Manager **Colin Grime**
Asst. Stage Manager (Book) **Betty Mook**
Asst. Stage Manager (Cast) ... **Fred Harding, Jackie Iddon**
Properties **Kay McCallen, Judith Chalmers,
Kath Houldsworth, Fay Whelan, Julie Whelan**
Wardrobe **Jayne Barty, Mary Hoghton**
Lighting **Fran Percival**
Sound **Norma Rogerson**

The set designed by **DAVID CHARTERS**,
constructed and painted by **ROY BLATCHFORD**
and built by the **PRODUCTION TEAM**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Assorted Ornaments

NEIL SIMON

The American playwright, Neil Simon, was born in 1927. After graduating from New York University, he started his career writing sketches for the Phil Silvers television show, which led to a further engagement as script-writer for the Tallulah Bankhead show in 1951. The following year he wrote sketches for a theatre show, Tamiment (Pa) Revue and finally reached Broadway in 1955, when, in collaboration with his brother, Daniel, he wrote sketches for 'Catch a Star.'

Since then he has written plays (occasionally collaborating with his brother) which have become as well known here as in his native country: Come Blow Your Horn (1961); Barefoot in the Park (1963); The Odd Couple (1965); Plaza Suite (1966); Last of the Red-Hot Lovers (1969); The Gingerbread Lady (1970); The Sunshine Boys (1972); California Suite (1976). These plays are regularly revived in London as well as by provincial and amateur companies.

He has also written the book for several musicals, 'Little Me,' 'Sweet Charity' and 'Promises, Promises', and continues to write for T.V. shows. Several of his plays have been made into films and he also wrote the screenplay for 'The Out-of-Towners' and 'Murder by Death'.

One measure of Mr. Simon's popular success lies in the fact that he is the only playwright to have had four plays running simultaneously on Broadway.

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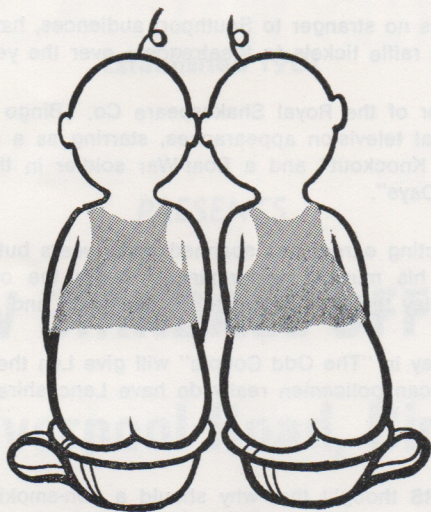
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SOME VERY

LEN BRINDLEY is no stranger to Southport audiences, having sold many programmes and raffle tickets to theatregoers over the years!

A former member of the Royal Shakespeare Co. (Bingo Club), he has also made several television appearances, starring as a silent one-eyed pirate in "It's a Knockout" and a Boar-War soldier in the audience of "The Good Old Days".

Len's amateur acting career has spanned many years but he is perhaps best known for his musical performances, being the only person we know who can play the 1812 Overture on the comb and paper.

The part of Murray in "The Odd Couple" will give Len the opportunity to prove that American policemen really do have Lancashire accents.

DAVID CHARTERS thought that why should a non-smoking, inadequate card player take on a role of a cigar puffing, irascible poker enthusiast?

When he was offered this part in Neil Simon's well written play, he didn't hesitate accepting. Here was an opportunity to appear for the first time with Len Brindley, a great oppo, whose acting career has paralleled his own in the town's two operatic societies.

A chance to work again with Marcus Walker. They last appeared together as a couple of New Yorkers searching for the phantom village of "Brigadoon." To LIVE through a production with Brian Tooley, after suffering such hilarious deaths in last seasons "Something's Afoot."

Finally, who could resist an invitation to be directed by Thelma Falls-Hand, a lady with such an infectious sense of humour that can only bring out the best of any player.

JUNE EVANS spends most of her life teaching. Has ambitions to be a universal globe-trotter, but cannot find a sponsor. Was thinking of going Japanese but thought that would be unpatriotic. Hasn't much of interest to say about herself unless she is allowed to fabricate, but enjoying this play enormously.

DOUG LINSLEY thinks playing Roy must be the original case of type-casting, as he spends his life trying to avoid tobacco smoke. But there was no type-casting where card playing ability was required and Doug was relieved to know that some other members of the cast were also novices.

ODD HISTORIES

In recent years Doug has played murderous thugs in "Vivat, Vivat Regina" and "Royal Hunt of the Sun." After all that killing he found it a pleasant contrast to be the groom in last seasons "Dandy Dick."

In private he tells people that he designs lavatories and washrooms. In fact he spends his life travelling to various branches of a leading High Street multiple for whom he does development work.

VALERIE PEDLAR first appeared onstage at the Little Theatre in S.D.C. summer variety shows and Christmas pantomimes. The last panto she appeared in was "Sleeping Beauty" in which she played the Prince. Since then she has taken parts in "Salad Days," "Voyage Round My Father", "Not Now Darling" and "The Others". She last worked with Thelma Falls-Hand when a Victorian Evening was presented at the Arts Centre to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the Cambridge Hall. Valerie is also a long-standing member of the Southport Bach Society and is at present studying drama with the Open University.

MIKE ROGERSON — what can one say about Mike that hasn't been said before? He has played the leading stages in Europe—Pontypool, Stockport, Hartlepool—the dazzling list is endless.

Now he has retired at the early age of 29 to Southport where he occasionally allows privileged theatregoers a glimpse of his talents.

Penned with his own hand, 1st April, 1980. (Fool—Ed.)

BRIAN TOOLEY has appeared regularly in plays since joining the S.D.C. the last one being "The Mating Game," which proves that it does pay to buy drinks for the members of the Play Selection and Casting Committee.

He wishes to make it quite clear that he is neither neurotic, suicidal or interested in cookery, but if someone doesn't let him have the recipe for London Broil soon, he is going to kill himself.

MARCUS WALKER has appeared in countless S.D.C. productions, but the Play Selection and Casting Committee insists that he continues until he gets one right. (He was asked to write -150 words about himself—you can see that his arithmetic isn't very good either—Ed.)

THELMA FALLS-HAND (Director) has been involved with quite a few Neil Simon plays. As one of the admiring audience for "Barefoot in the Park." As the Jewish Momma, Mrs. Baker, in "Come Blow Your Horn." As the neglected wife, Karen, in "Plaza Suite" and as the dried-out drunk, Evie, in "Gingerbread Lady." Here we go again . . .



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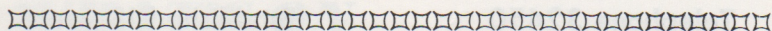
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'Little' Bits and Pieces

Success—our pleas to you to write to us on any aspect of the theatre has paid off, and we have had a number of letters from patrons. True, they were all complimentary, but it's nice to know our efforts are appreciated. Mentioning names is perhaps not necessary, but 'to whom it concerns' we have passed on your helpful comments regarding ice cream sales!

All of our correspondents found this page interesting, giving as it attempts to do some "newsy" items. Incidentally, another innovation. At the back of the foyer you will find a selection of photograph's showing our next production, "A Penny for a Song" in rehearsal. Not all 'action' shots — some of the cast are seen in their 'off duty' moments!

Preparations are well in hand for our Gala Night on 15th May. According to the tickets there is a Champagne Reception, After Show Supper, Late Bars, Dancing, Evening Dress. There may just be a few tickets left, and if you are interested the Front of House or Bar Staff will be able to help you.

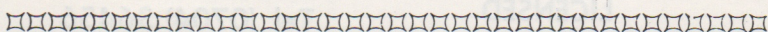
Members and friends recently had a superb 'Chinese Evening', courtesy of Geoff and Pat Randle, at their Crimond Hotel. The food was excellent, and I gather Pat is being pressured to pass on the recipes!

An incidental statistic—theatres in the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain, and the S.D.C. is a member, played to over 350,000 people last year, surely a testament to the appeal of 'live' theatre.

Finally, remember we do have a column each week in the Saturday 'Visiter', which gives up to date news on our various activities.

Happy Theatregoing and don't forget to keep writing to 'Little' Bits and Pieces as we certainly enjoy reading your letters.

J. H. M.



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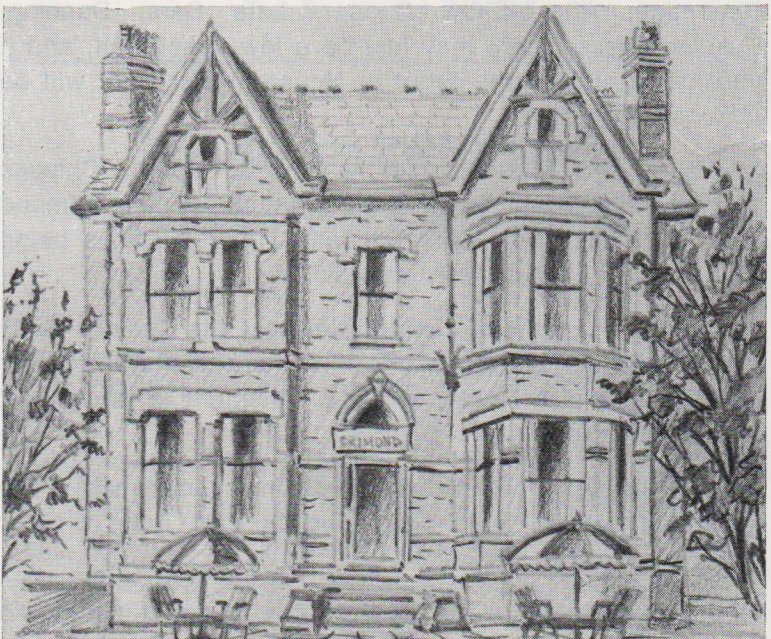
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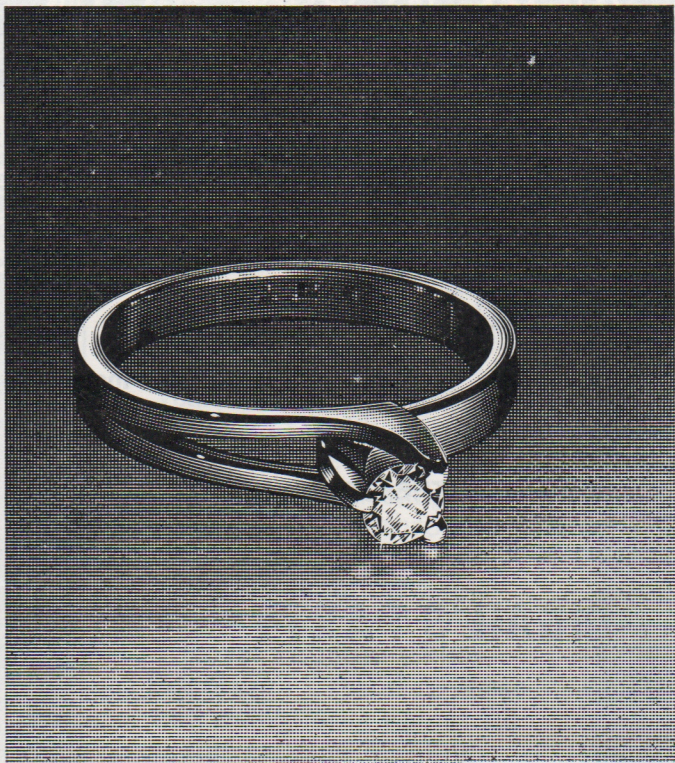
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by Stanley Houghton

BOLTON LITTLE THEATRE

20th April—3rd May

THE MAGISTRATE

by A. W. Pinero

BRADFORD LITTLE THEATRE

14th—19th April

ABIGAIL'S PARTY

by Mike Leigh

STOCKPORT GARRICK THEATRE

12th—19th April

CHILDREN'S HOUR

by Lilliam Hellman

BINGLEY LITTLE THEATRE

Sunday, 4th May at 7.30 pm

S.D.C. on tour. "The Odd Couple" rides again. All 'Little' supporters welcome—for details contact Mike and Norma Rogerson on Formby 70922.

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