



SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB PRESENTS

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 221585

Lost in Yonkers

Lost in Yonkers

BY

**NEIL
SIMON**

DIRECTED BY

**JOHN
SHARP**

27

FEBRUARY

TO

7 MARCH 98

EACH EVENING AT 7.45

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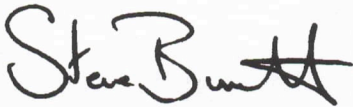
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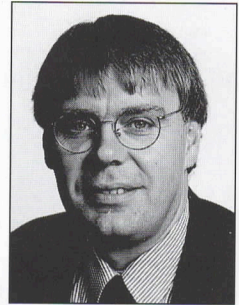
Swiss Life are pleased to sponsor this production of *Lost in Yonkers* and we would like to take this opportunity to wish the Southport Dramatic Club every success with their production.

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SURVIVAL WITH A SMILE

Yonkers is part of the New York metropolis and it is situated close to the Bronx, north east of the central area of Manhattan. Its curious name comes from a Dutch settler of the early seventeenth century, who was nicknamed 'De Jonkheer' or squire. The township does not merit much of a mention in modern guide-books, as it has no major sites of interest, other than a race-track. It was, however, one of the areas settled by immigrants to the United States in the early part of this century, particularly Jews from central and eastern Europe.

We tend to associate anti-semitism with Hitler and the Third Reich, but this problem had a longer history. Persecution was quite common in the later part of the last century and the early part of this, and it led to Jews leaving to search for a better life in the New World. Often this meant a quite difficult start in the the poorer parts of New York, but many of these Jewish immigrants established small businesses and in one or two generations became quite well off. Their stories are part of the epic of survival, survival in difficult circumstances and often against the odds, but survival at all costs, which is a major theme of Jewish history throughout the centuries. Today the Jewish community constitutes a significant part of that great melting-pot of nations that is the United States.

The first thing that immigrants to the United States saw was usually the Statue of Liberty, a colossal statue at the entrance to New York harbour. It contains a plaque with these words.

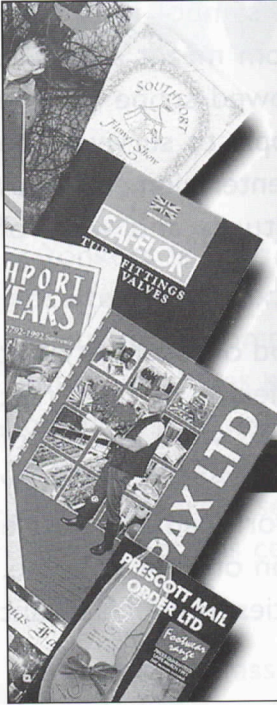
'Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.'

It is no accident that this statue became a symbol for a free society and a chance to start a new life. Freedom meant a release from the oppressiveness of the past and it allowed scope for the expression of the humour that had enabled people to survive. The comic inventiveness that is found in American entertainment owes much to the coming together of diverse cultures and ways of thinking.

In the 1920s the United States enjoyed a period of prosperity, but it was very different in the 1930s when it was affected by the Great Depression. The Stock Market crashed and millions were put out of work. Poverty, hardship and demoralisation were the everyday experience of many Americans. Even those in work had to struggle to remain so, though some took the easier option of a life of crime. Survival meant enterprise, looking for opportunities, even if it meant leaving the kids behind.

By the early 1940s the Second World War was under way and in December 1941, following the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the United States joined in, declaring war on Japan and Germany. For obvious reasons Jewish communities were amongst those most conscious of what Fascism represented and they supported the war effort. In the years that followed American troops fought in campaigns in Africa, Europe and the Far East.

The play 'Lost in Yonkers' takes place in 1942 when the Depression was still a reality, but the world was changing as the United States entered global war. The great issue of survival was to take new forms. For some people it was on the world stage, but for others the struggle was at a more domestic level. The learning of courage did not only occur on a heroic scale, but in bringing wit and resourcefulness to cope with more mundane realities.



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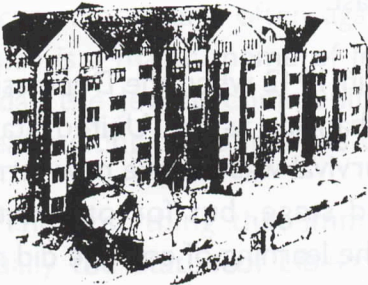
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NEIL SIMON

'I suppose I knew all along that I was going to write about my family'.

Neil Simon was born in 1927, the second of two sons, and grew up in the Bronx area of New York in the Depression of the 1930's. His father was a fabric salesman and was often away from home. His mother's family emigrated from Russia at the end of the nineteenth century. His Jewish family background and early life are described in 'Brighton Beach Memoirs' and 'Biloxi Blues', both of which have been made into films. There are similar elements in 'Lost in Yonkers', though it is not strictly speaking autobiographical.

Neil Simon left school at 16 and for a while worked in the garment industry. For a while he was in the Army Air Force Reserve Training Programme, but after the war he teamed up with his brother to work as a scriptwriter. He had always loved comedy. As a boy he regularly watched the silent movie classics of Chaplin, Keaton, and Laurel and Hardy. His first writing was as a scriptwriter for comedians, and his breakthrough came with the material he provided for Phil Silvers in the 'Bilko' sketches. Later he turned to full-length plays and in the 1960's wrote a series of hits, including 'Barefoot in the Park', 'The Odd Couple' and 'The Sunshine Boys'.

Most of Neil Simon's reputation comes from his ability to write the witty dialogue that is typical of his Jewish background, but in 'Lost in Yonkers' he achieved something more. The play has characters which are explored in depth and there is a serious underpinning to the comedy. It is not surprising that it won him his greatest honour, the Pulitzer Prize of 1991.

Lost in Yonkers

by NEIL SIMON

Directed by JOHN SHARP

Cast

Jay.....Graham Davies

Arty.....Jamie Gavin

Eddie.....Paul Renwick

Bella.....Sally Roberts

Grandma Kurnitz.....Thelma Falls-Hand

Louie.....David Parry

Gert.....Mandy Evans

The action takes place in an apartment above 'Kurnitz's Kandy Store' in Yonkers, New York. The time is 1942.

There will be one interval of approximately twenty minutes

An induction loop is installed in this theatre for the benefit of

STAGING

STAGE MANAGER.....	Christine Haynes
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	John T. Haynes
PROMPT	Jean Watkinson
PROPERTIES	Janine Grime, Barbara Crawford and Blyth Crawford
WARDROBE.....	Frankie Turner, Victoria Wilson
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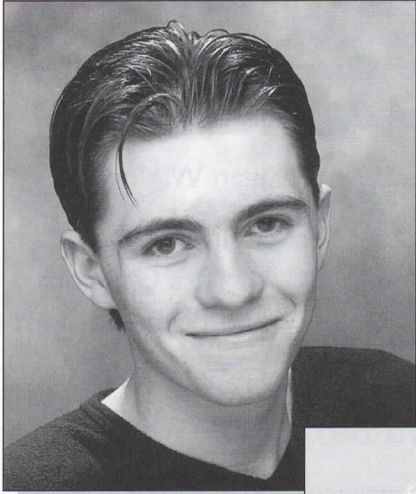
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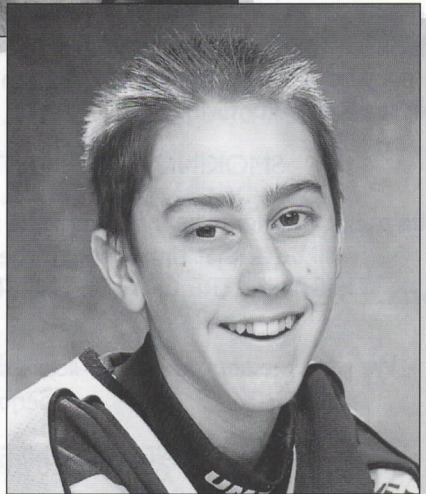
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Graham Davies



Thelma Falls-Hand



Jamie Gavin

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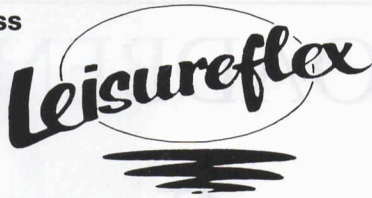
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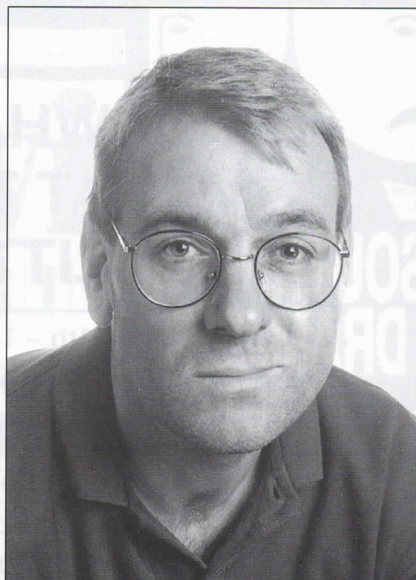
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Volunteer helpers are also needed. We have now raised over £13,000 towards the purchase of our Theatre and thank all members, subscribers and patrons for their help so far. Please keep on 'Bringing and Buying', we will stay open until our stock dries up.



Sally Roberts



David Parry



Paul Renwick



Mandy Evans



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“MURDER BY MISADVENTURE”

by Edward Taylor

Directed by Joyce Goldsworth



24th April – 2nd May 1998

“LADY WINDERMERE’S FAN”

by Oscar Wilde

Directed by Margaret Mann



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