

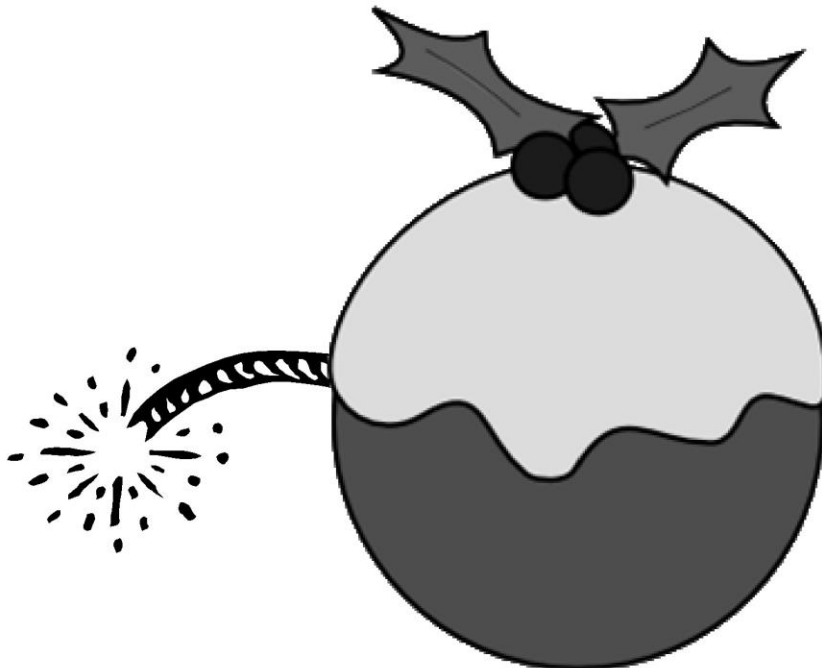


July 8th, 9th & 10th at 8pm
MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS
present



ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR

by Alan Ayckbourn
directed by Jon McNamara



At Moot Hall, The Stow, Harlow CM20 3AG

ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR

Sidney Hopcroft

Jane Hopcroft

Geoffrey Jackson

Eva Jackson

Ronald Brewster-Wright

Marion Brewster-Wright

Dan Powell

Kerry Rowland

Alan Hodgson

Angela Hodgson

Tim Parkes

Nic Parkes

Directed by Jon McNamara

Prompt Biddy McAlpine

Set Designed by Paul Regeli and Bett Hewlett

Built by Tony Edwards, Geoff Leeds and Mick Caswell

Lighting by Phil Waite and Nick Woodfine

Props by Mick and Rosemary Caswell

Stage Staff - Anne Farr and members of the company

Alan Ayckbourn is the Artistic Director of the Stephen Joseph Theatre and one of the world's most popular and prolific professional playwrights. He has written 70 full length plays and more than 20 other revues and plays for children. He is also an internationally acclaimed director.

He has received more than 25 awards and honours including an Olivier and a Moliere, Playwright of the Year and the British Guild of Writers' Lifetime Achievement Award. The 1992 Cameron Mackintosh Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Oxford University, he is now Visiting Professor at the University of Hull. In 1994, he received a Montblanc de la Culture Award for Europe for 'establishing a thriving theatrical tradition in Scarborough and for his dedication and commitment to it'. In addition to holding a number of honorary degrees, he was appointed a CBE in 1987 and in 1997 was knighted for services to the theatre.

Fatuous fact: Alan Ayckbourn has been said to be the most performed living playwright in the world. There is no plausible way either to prove or disprove this. But he is undoubtedly very, very popular

Director's note

Take three dysfunctional couples, add a plot and a set and you have the essence of an Alan Ayckbourn production (actually you can lose most of the plot!). In *Absurd Person Singular* (1972) we are turning to an early Ayckbourn play and to one of his first real successes in the theatre. It is also the first time we revel in the dark humour that has become so characteristic of his work.

The play starts when the slightly sleazy Sidney Hopcroft (grocer and budding property developer) invites his bank manager and a local architect (plus their wives) to pre-Christmas drinks in an attempt to win their support for his rather dubious projects. The play is not so much a story, but an exploration of social status between the couples - with the rise of the "little man" and the "fall" of others. This change in social status is strongly reflected in the couples' personal relationships.

If the Hopcroft party is a social debacle, the following year's pre-Christmas drinks at the home of the architect (again confined to the kitchen) is a nightmare! Whether things could get worse really depends on your view of the events that take place on the subsequent Christmas at the home of the bank manager!

As a member of Moot House Players I have directed quite a number of Alan Ayckbourn's plays (and appeared in several). *Absurd Person Singular* has always been considered "the difficult one" because it is performed in three different kitchens. I was mainly persuaded to "have a go" by our set designer Paul Regeli, who kept telling me that "it can be done". Eventually, I realised I was creating a pointless problem for myself - the play isn't about kitchens - it's about the activities that go on in them, especially at parties.

So, with our kitchens being "nominal", I was encouraged to gather a cast. While it would have been possible to create one from our well-established actors, I've chosen to pick my team from the younger and newer members of the Players ... and what a wonderful team they have proven to be. Sadly, a few weeks before the opening night, I had to replace one of the team (due to personal reasons). However, the rest of them have rallied around to support the new cast member and I'm sure by first night their performance will be flawless. Incidentally, the title of the play has no significance with regard to the story. It was simply a working title that was retained. If it refers to anyone or anything, maybe it is to the people who direct this script: maybe we are the absurd person singular!

Enjoy!

DATES FOR NEXT SEASON

November 11th, 12th and 13th 2010

February 3rd, 4th and 5th 2011

March 23rd, 24th and 25th 2011

May 12th, 13th and 14th 2011

July 7th, 8th and 9th 2011

While we are not sure exactly what plays we will be presenting for the first four productions next Season, we will aim - as always - for a selection to suit all tastes and hope to see you there.

In July, however, we hope to be offering something new to the Players - an International Festival of one-act plays presented by small groups we have met during our own overseas tours, supported by a one-act play by MHP. Language will be no barrier to your appreciation of this event - the actors are fantastic, expressive and extremely effective in their rôles. There is comedy, tragedy and reality in every piece which has a universal language and speaks directly to us all.

Please note that ALL performances start at 8.00 p.m.

Moot House Players acknowledges with thanks the help of their parent organisation, the Mark Hall and Netteswell Community Association.

All ticket holders are invited to make use of the facilities of the Moot House Social Club bar before, during and after the performance.

Moot House Players can be contacted at **moothouse.players@ntlworld.com**

Details of past and future productions can be found on the Company's website **www.moothouseplayers.com**

If you are not on our mailing list, please leave your name and address at the Box Office - if you have an e-mail address we can use, please let us have it, as we can, more easily, reach everyone by e-mail in advance of each production.