



Stoke-on-Trent  
Repertory Theatre

**£1**



# See How They Run

by Philip King

7th to 12th December 2009 at 7.30pm

Matinee: Saturday, 12th at 2.30pm



# Welcome

Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre is supported and run by volunteers who regularly give up their time and without whom we could not deliver the standard of production and customer service which our patrons have come to expect. Some of these people you will encounter tonight, others fulfil a less visible but no less, vital role.

Backstage Crew, Front-of-House, Bar and Coffee Bar, Members, Friends, Young Rep and all other helpers - we are deeply indebted to everyone involved - **Thank You.**

Some information which you may find helpful:

**The Bar** is open from 6.45 until 11.00pm on performance evenings and drinking-up time is 20 minutes afterwards.

**Coffee, tea and confectionery** are available in the foyer from 6.45.

***All interval refreshments may be ordered before the performance to avoid queuing later.***

**The car park** is open from 6.30. until 11.00pm on performance evenings; overspill parking is available in the Staffordshire University car park further along Leek Road.

***Neither the Rep nor Staffordshire University can accept responsibility for damage to, or loss of vehicles.***

***Please note that smoking is not allowed in any part of the theatre building.***

***We hope that you enjoy your evening with us.***



***PLEASE ENSURE THAT MOBILE  
PHONES ARE SWITCHED OFF  
DURING THE PERFORMANCE.***

# Booking Information

Our box office is open from the Monday preceding each Rep production through until the last night of the show from 5.00 to 8.00pm.

**Tel: 01782 209784**

Book tickets during opening hours from Music Mania,  
4/5/ Piccadilly Arcade, Hanley.

**Tel: 01782 206000**

***Why not join our free MAILING LIST ?***

Simply complete a mailing list form, available in the bar and leave in the box situated at the Box Office.

**[www.stokerep.org.uk](http://www.stokerep.org.uk)**

Find out 'What's On' and 'What's News'  
by visiting the Rep's website.

Information about current and forthcoming productions,  
shows, concerts and activities is available  
at the click of a mouse.

Join our emailing list by registering at  
**[howard.goodall@stokerep.org.uk](mailto:howard.goodall@stokerep.org.uk)**

# Thank You

As always, we are indebted to the  
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voluntarily attend all our performances.



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## Director's Notes

70 years ago in 1939, war was declared and the future of the whole country became more uncertain and precarious. People felt that they were losing control of their own destinies, ranging from acute danger to daily tedium.

Despite these pressures, the typical attitudes of the day prevailed, 'Life goes on' and 'Non illigitimis asbestos carborundum' (don't let the b\*\*\*\*\* grind you down) with the war time producing a rich vein of British popular entertainment consisting of music, film and theatre.

Philip King wrote *See How They Run*, originally entitled *Moon Madness*, in the 1940s, finally opening in the West End in January 1945 to excellent notices. Set in the vicarage of Merton-cum-Middlewick, a small village in middle England, the play is a classic British farce, incorporating mistaken identity, vicars and doors encouraging the audience to suspend reality and is arguably one of the best of this genre ever written .

Farce is supposed to be slightly naughty and risqué, a bit of a cheap thrill, but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century these situations have lost their subversive edge and the naughtiness is found in the feeling of ones guilt for watching something so silly and unashamedly British. There is a fond nostalgia of a bygone age when political correctness was not a priority. This type of farce did go out of fashion, but has recently been revived in London and Manchester delighting audiences.

Is it coincidence that during the current economic downturn, where people do not feel as secure as they have done for many years, that this form of nostalgic escapism and inexcusable silliness is proving to be a popular antidote to the daily news? Or is it simply the opportunity to spend two hours being entertained by, what is now, an innocent entertaining storyline, producing howls of laughter?

**Alan Clarke**



# ***The Cast***

(in order of appearance)

Ida:	Beverley Marshall
Miss Skillon:	Rosemary Gresty
The Rev Lionel Toop:	James Lawson
Penelope Toop:	Angela Dale
Lance Corp Clive Winton:	Jonathan Fernyhough
The Intruder:	John Stone
The Bishop of Lax:	Ian Birkin
The Rev Arthur Humphrey:	Simon Bland
Police Sergeant:	Steve Powell

## ***Synopsis of Scenes***

### **Act 1**

The hall of the vicarage,  
Merton-cum-Middlewick.  
An afternoon in September.

### **Act 2**

The same, that night.

### **Act 3**

The same, a few minutes later.

***There will be a twenty minute interval  
between Act Two and Act Three***

# ***The Crew***

Director:	Alan Clarke
Assistant Director:	Emma Kirk
Stage Director:	Richard Masters
Set Designer:	Tina Campbell
Stage Manager:	Bill Hancock
Construction Manager:	Bill Hancock
Set construction:	Mike Adams, John Beeston Bill Hancock, Peter Logan Richard Masters, Jamie Wood
Lighting Design & Operation:	Malcolm Rushton
Sound Operator:	Mike Adams
Set Dressing:	Margo Bloor
Props:	Emma Kirk
Costumes:	Sylvia Wright
Programme Design:	Janet Smith
Company Photographer:	Peter Croft

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# Farce at the Rep

In some quarters, farce as a theatrical form is regarded with reluctant tolerance or undisguised lofty disdain as its undoubted popularity and robust style offend the delicate sensitivities of those who feel that drama should satisfy the higher intellectual and spiritual needs of its audiences.

Happily, this attitude is put firmly in its place not only by theatre history – Greek and Roman comedy sometimes had an earthy directness which fully matches its modern equivalent – but also by the fact that some of the greatest playwrights have exercised their skills in this area. The sequences from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during which Bottom the Weaver and his hapless associates rehearse and later perform before the Duke and Hippolyta are inspired examples of farcical inanity which leave audiences helpless with laughter. Some of Chekhov's shorter pieces have a thrust and drive which evoke a delighted response from audiences which are more wary of the greater subtlety of his major plays.

The art of writing soundly constructed and consistently hilarious farce is a talent which relatively few possess and the technical skills required by both actors and directors are such that many seasoned and capable professionals give it a wide berth because they know that it is not for them. Amateur productions sometimes need more rehearsal time than is usually available to master the timing, pace and reaction variations which are crucial for success. At the same time, it is both patronising and inaccurate to say that amateurs should avoid the medium because the right combination of writer, director and players has frequently proved the fallacy of this view.

The most successful production in the history of the Rep was Michael Frayn's **Noises Off**, which ran for the usual eleven performances at the old theatre and was retained for a third week to meet the demand for tickets. It is hardly surprising that it was the undisputed choice for the very first production at our new home.

Older members and supporters may remember productions such as **Move over Mrs Markham**, **Run for Your Wife** and **Out of Order** from the Ray Cooney selection and **A Flea in her Ear**, which represented French flair and invention at its best. Some extremely dedicated and talented casts provided rich entertainment for appreciative audiences.

The true value of farce is its ability to make audiences forget their every day cares and problems and revel in an atmosphere where the highly improbable is routine and the complications which follow have a zany logic all of their own.

The opportunity to escape from reality - however briefly - is an antidote to economic downturn, blustering politicians, demanding relatives and similar afflictions.

Healthy laughter is a medicine beyond price, a fact which was recognised by the Greeks and Romans and constitutes their most important legacy to theatre goers in the twenty-first century.

Curtain up - trousers down!

Peter Dutton

**17th December 2009**

**at 7.30pm**

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\*\*\*\*\*

**Coming soon . . .**

**the Rep Players' production of  
Charlotte Jones' comedy drama**

**Humble Boy**

**25th to 30th January 2010 at 7.30pm**

**Matinee: Saturday 30th at 2.30pm**

**Tickets for both shows available now from:**

**the Rep Box Office: 01782 209784**

**or Music Mania, Piccadilly Arcade,**

**Hanley: 01782 206000**



There was a time in the 1950's when Philip King's agent stated that every night, somewhere in the world, one of his plays would be in performance – which argues a level of popularity on a par with Alan Ayckbourn of a later generation.

"*See How They Run*" is one of the comedy/farces for which he is mainly remembered and is unusual as one of the few plays that he wrote in his own right. A significant amount of his output was co-written and his chief associate in this respect was Falkland L Cary.

*"Big Bad Mouse"* starred Jimmy Edwards and Eric Sykes in the original production and Peggy Mount was the larger-than-life mother-in-law who dominated in the productions of *Sailor Beware!* and *"Watch it Sailor!"* which both enjoyed major West End runs and subsequent tours.

*On Monday Next* was a forerunner of Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* in recounting the disasters which befall a theatrical touring company of impressively limited talents.

Although Philip King's plays have not featured strongly on Rep play lists, they have been popular with companies visiting the old Theatre Royal and the Municipal Hall in Newcastle and have thus had a reasonable airing in North Staffordshire.

**Peter Dutton**

***A very big thank you to our coffee bar manager, John Cooper.***

Each year John arranges the purchase of a Christmas tree for the bar area, which he then decorates so beautifully with his own hand made decorations.

**Thank you, John, from the Rep members and audiences for bringing us this little bit of Christmas magic.**

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## Artist in the Gallery

Our Artist in the Gallery over Christmas is Anne Watkins who is a professional painter and costumier who trained initially at the Burslem School of Art and then subsequently in London and Paris.

Anne says, “Leonardo da Vinci said, ‘I am the eyes through which others see.’ This is what I see.”

Well known to many of our members, Anne has designed costumes for companies all over the world and has recently happily settled her business at the Burslem School of Art.

Part of this mixed media exhibition is a reflective from the current 'life sessions' which are an opportunity for artists, both professional and amateur, to meet at the Burslem School of Art and work with a professional life model.

Many thanks to Anne for the loan of her work.

***Gordon Toon***



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