

## Dunstable Rep Theatre Club

The Little Theatre  
High Street South  
Dunstable  
LU5 3SF

### **The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940!**

Directed by John O'Leary-Fawcett

#### **Synopsis**

*"Imagine a 42<sup>nd</sup> Street with corpses where the songs ought to be."*

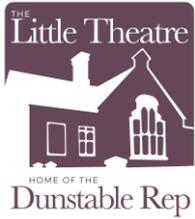
The creative team responsible for a recent Broadway flop (in which three chorus girls were murdered by the mysterious 'Stage Door Slasher') assemble for a backer's audition at an isolated country mansion. The house is filled with sliding wall panels, secret passageways, Nazi spies, a bumbling police inspector and a German maid who is apparently four different people - all of which figure in the intrigue and comic mayhem which follows when the 'Slasher' reappears, striking again - and again, and again.

As the composer, lyricist, actors and director prepare their performance, and a blizzard cuts off any possible retreat, bodies start to drop in plain sight, knives spring out of nowhere, masked figures drag their victims behind swivelling bookcases, and accusing fingers point in all directions. As suspicion mounts with the demise of each new victim until the 'Slasher' is finally unmasked - much to the relief of the audience, who will need a rest following the non-stop barrage of laughter.

The production will hopefully provide a new energy to a classic who-dunnit spoof, combining the suspense of an Agatha Christie and the electricity of Baz Luhrman...with the madness of Benny Hill thrown in!

#### **Characters (5F, 5M - Suggested Playing Ages included below)**

- Helsa Wenzel:** (20's to mid 30's) The German Maid. Helsa is the maid of the Grossenknueten estate. A humorless woman later discovered to have an interesting secret. Must be strong in physical skills.
- Elsa Von Grossenknueten:** (late 40's+) The Host. Elsa is the owner of the mansion and is the financial backer of many musicals. She is extremely eccentric, and thinks that the idea of chasing after a killer is great fun.
- Nikki Crandall:** (20's) An Actress. Nikki is considered a typical chorus girl-but she is eventually revealed to be much more. Must sing and move well.
- Marjorie Baverstock:** (50's+) The Producer. Marjorie is a Broadway producer. She constantly flatters everyone around her, and speaks in elevated language; her "new word" is "divoon."
- Bernice Roth:** (30's to 50) The Librettist. The perpetually thirsty lyricist, she is Roger's partner. Bernice is very odd and emotional, frequently losing her composure and screaming.



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- Michael Kelly:** (30's to 40's) The Law. Sergeant Kelly is a New York City police officer-Irish, of course. Kelly's tough, no-nonsense attitude puts him at odds with the zany Elsa and the dramatic types that visit.
- Patrick O'Reilly:** (40's) An Actor. O'Reilly claims to be an Irish tenor, but he is very suspicious. He has a physical brawl with Helsa. Must sing and be able to do broad Irish, Bronx and German dialects!
- Ken De La Maize:** (40's+) The Director. Ken is a "typical" director, speaking of theater as a "pure art." He has an annoying habit of name-dropping, constantly citing the various celebrities he has worked with over the years. Eccentric, affected.
- Eddie McCuen:** (20's-30's) An Actor. Eddie is the out of work comedian with an endless supply of bad jokes. He is attracted to Nikki, but fumbles when he tries to talk to her. Must sing and move well.
- Roger Hopewell:** (30's- 50) The Lyricist. Roger is the composer for "White House Merry-Go-Round", and Bernice's partner; the two have had a string of Broadway hits. Roger enjoys teasing Ken about his artistic ways, but flares up whenever someone insults his musical style. Eccentric.