

Black Comedy

by Peter Shaffer

Directed by James Trapp

Auditions - Thursday 22nd October 2026 - 7:45pm (at the Little Theatre, Dunstable)

Performances - 15 - 23 January 2027 (excluding Sunday 17th & Monday 18th Jan) plus a matinee: 2pm Saturday 16th January)

The play will have a run time of approximately 90 minutes with an interval of 20 minutes.

Rehearsals - Monday & Wednesday evenings, plus some Fridays as required. 7:30 - 10pm.

About the play

Black Comedy is a celebrated 60s farce that explores the chaos that can ensue during a powercut. For the audience however, every comedic mishap, near miss, calamitous tumble and mistaken identity is clear to see as the properties of light and dark are reversed. So whilst actors are *behaving* as if the lights are off, the audience sees everything.

The play charts one disastrous evening for young sculptor Brindsley Miller, who, in order to impress his prospective father-in-law (a terrifyingly stern Colonel) and a german millionaire who might buy some of his art and launch his career, has 'borrowed' the antique furniture from his neighbour Harold - without his knowledge! When the power in the building throws them all into blackout, and Harold returns unexpectedly early from his trip away, Brindsley must return the furniture without Harold finding out. Brindsley juggles all these pressures, plus the increasingly drunk lady from upstairs and even his ex-girlfriend turning up, while trying to keep the evening running smoothly... with disastrous consequences!

This hilarious, riotous play is a challenge for any actor, and pushes the boundaries of physical comedy.

Characters

Brindsley Miller - A dashing but hapless young sculptor whose calm and poise gets slowly eroded through the chaos of the evening. Playing age 25-35

Carol Melkett - Brindsley's demanding, spoiled and upper class fiancée. Playing age 20 - 30.

Colonel Melkett - Carol's pompous and authoritarian father, who disapproves of Brindsley and his artistic lifestyle. Playing age 50-65.

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Harold Gorringe - Brindsley's neurotic neighbour, an antique dealer with a provincial accent, from whom Brindsley has 'borrowed' the furniture. Playing age 30-50.

Clea - Brindsley's vivacious, manipulative and mischievous ex-girlfriend. Playing age 20 - 35.

Miss Furnival - The straight-laced teetotaler from the upstairs flat, who inadvertently gets rather inebriated during the blackout. Playing age 45-65.

Shuppanzigh - A German immigrant with a love of art and music who works for the electricity board. Playing age 35-55.

Georg Bamberger - A wealthy, elderly art collector whom Brindsley is desperate to impress. Playing age 55+.

The action takes place one rainy evening in 1965 in Brindsley's flat in London.