The Play That Goes Wrong Act 1 AD programme notes for Sat 2nd July 2022

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the Theatre Royal Plymouth for this UK Tour Production of ‘The Play That Goes Wrong’ by the Mischief Theatre Company. The play was written by Henry Lewis, Henry Shields and Jonathan Sayer. The director for this tour is Sean Turner and the production manager is Digby Robinson.

My name is Penny and I will be describing Act 1 for you. Act 1 lasts for 60 minutes with a 20 minute interval with Act 2 lasting 40 minutes which will be described for you by my colleague Denise, who will begin her notes 5 minutes before the start of Act 2.

The Play That Goes Wrong is a play about Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society’s production of ‘The Murder at Haversham Manor’. As you will discover this is a play with fast paced dialogue, and many mishaps, so I will do my best to describe them for you.

The action begins with the stage open to the auditorium with members of the Cornley Drama Society trying to organise the ramshackle set, and Trevor (the sound and lighting technician), attempting to get you – the audience – the help him find a missing object. The setting is the drawing room of Haversham Manor in the winter of 1922. It is decorated with dark red wallpaper. At the rear is a panelled dark wooden door, above which is hung a heraldic family shield. To the right of the door there is a speaking tube attached to the wall, a large window with long red velvet curtains and then to the right of this stands a longcase clock which shows the time as 5 o’clock. Hung on the wall to the left of the door is a barometer. The right hand wall, which extends out towards the wings, consists of two levels. Below it is lined with filled bookcases and the lower stained glass door to the lift leading up to the second floor which is Charles Haversham’s study. There, beneath a circular window, he has an elegant wooden desk and chair, a safe set into the wall, a globe style drinks cabinet and a large potted palm. There is a door leading out to the first floor landing, the other end of the speaking tube and the glazed upper doors of the lift. The upper floor is supported by a large wooden post. On the opposite left hand side is a large fireplace with a panelled overmantel above which hangs a portrait of a ginger spaniel. Beside the grate there are two swords and a large coal scuttle. In the centre of the stage is an Oriental carpet on which stands a chaise longue with green upholstery, deep gold coloured fringing and scattered with cushions. To the right is a small table, with a silver tray set with four small tumblers. To the left is a rectangular coffee table with a glass vase of red carnations and a telephone. To the far right, and in the auditorium, is Trevor’s sound and lighting desk. It is littered with empty drink cans. Once Annie – the stage manager, Trevor and the stage hands have manically rushed around, cleared away a large plastic tool box and readied the set, a red velvet curtain descends and the ‘play’ begins.

Characters and Costumes: Although the cast members of the Cornley Dramatic Society have first names, they are only known by their character names except those which I will explain to you.

Annie Twilloil is the scatty stage manager. Her messy blonde hair is tied in pigtails and she is wearing baggy dungarees over a red and white striped long sleeved T shirt, and trainers.

Trevor is the lighting and sound engineer. He is tall and muscular with his short black dreadlocks tied in a tufty topknot. He wears fitted but ripped black jeans and a snugly fitting sleeveless black T shirt.

Chris is the Director. Attempting to be suave he has a moustache and is wearing a smart grey suit with a white shirt and red bow tie. Once the ‘play’ begins he then becomes the cast member Inspector Carter wearing a brown trench coat.

Charles Haversham– the recently deceased, is tall with sandy coloured hair and wears a mauve velvet smoking jacket over dark trousers and black patent evening shoes. Although he is largely silent (on account of him being dead), he contributes much with his gestures.

Perkins is the ageing butler. He wears a dark suit with a cream waistcoat.

Cecil Haversham is Charles’ younger brother. He is an enthusiastic actor with expansive gestures. He is wearing cricket whites over a light blue blazer.

Thomas Colleymore is an old school friend of Charles. He a brash, wealthy young man and is wearing a tan plus fours suit and cravat, argyle socks and brown brogues.

Florence Colleymore is Thomas’ younger sister, and fiancée of Charles Haversham. She is a brazen and blowsy young lady wearing a red flapper dress with a handkerchief hem. She has her dark hair in a bob and wears black dancing shoes.

In Act 2 we meet Arthur the gardener – but I will leave my colleague Denise to describe him to you.

Cast:

Trevor is played by Gabriel Paul

Annie by Beth Lilly

Chris and Inspector Carter by Colin Burnicle

Jonathan / Charles Haversham by Steven Bostance

Robert / Thomas Colleymore by Kazeem Tosin Amore

Dennis / Perkins the butler by Damien James

Sandra / Florence Colleymore by Aisha Numah

Max / Cecil Haversham / Arthur the gardener by Edi de Melo

Assistant Stage Managers by Harry Boyd, Mary McGurk, Clare Noy and Will Taylor.