

Bedroom Farce™

Director • Marion Bentley

Lighting Designer • Eric Fielding

Makeup & Hair Designer • Ruth Geilman

Scenic Designer • Eric Fielding

Costume Designer • Janet Swenson

Production Stage Manager • Martin Sorensen

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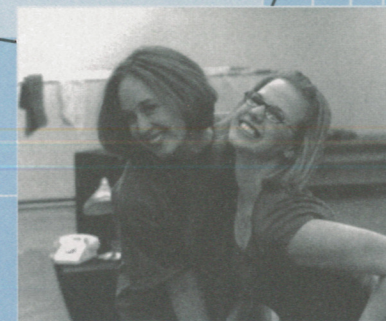
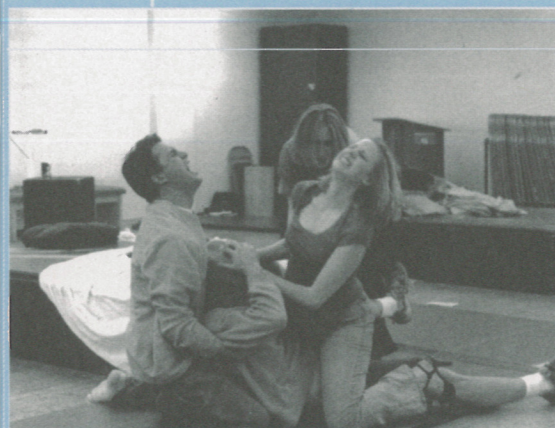
Located on the sixth floor of the Wilkinson Center 378-9020 for reservations •
www.byu.edu/skyroom

The cast

in order of appearance



Ernest	Dan Hess
Delia	Susan Whitenight
Nick	Ary Farahnakian
Jan	Jjana Valentiner Morrill
Malcolm	Casey Paul Griffiths
Kate	Emmelyn Thayer
Trevor	Matt Biedell
Susannah	Amy Dawn Addams



Setting



The Present
London, England



Act One
Saturday evening, 7 p.m.

Intermission

Act Two
A Few Moments Later



Here's Looking at Us

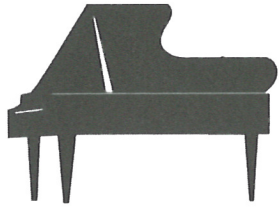
by Nola Smith

Alan who? If you have never heard the name Ayckbourn ("ACHE-born"), you are not alone. Although this author's works have played successfully in London almost perpetually for nearly three decades, his name is nearly unknown on this side of the pond. British producers count on Ayckbourn for one lucrative hit after another, but American producers have largely rejected his plays as too "British." Some theatre critics have dismissed him as merely "commercial." Yet Ayckbourn may be the most theatrically innovative playwright of the late twentieth century. In sixty or so plays—one loses count—he has extended the boundaries of stage time and space in ways unimagined by other writers.

It is true that Ayckbourn's subjects are unabashedly "Brit." His undistinguished English upbringing, complete with placid boarding schools and quarreling parents, provided the human touchstone for his work. Performing runs in his blood—his grandparents were music-hall personalities, his father an assistant concert master of the London Symphony Orchestra, and his mother a successful romance writer. He learned creative discipline sitting at the kitchen table imitating her as she pounded away at her typewriter.

Ayckbourn's theatrical training was similarly informal. He assimilated diverse skills at his first job, in a small experimental playhouse whose producer insisted that everybody participate in all aspects of a show. This producer also gave him his start as a professional playwright, challenging him to stop complaining about his shallow roles and to write something better. Ayckbourn's first shaky efforts improved quickly, and soon he was keeping the seaside playhouse in business. He won

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- Richard III, by William Shakespeare
- The Philadelphia Story, by Philip Barry

MARGETTS SERIES

- The Children's Hour, by Lillian Hellman
- The Taste of Sunrise, by Suzan Zeder
- Hancock County, by Tim Slover
- Rashomon, by Fay and Michael Kanin

over fickle middle-class audiences on holiday by capturing the gist of their everyday problems with amusing, inventive style.

Ayckbourn's plays are anything but commonplace. He regularly challenges his audiences by compressing space and time—in a manner that works only in the theatre and cannot be transferred to cinema. For instance, he has used half of a tennis court, with a full game in progress. He has simultaneously juggled two separate and unrelated dinner parties on one stage table, and compressed a house's three floors of disparate activities into one astonishing level. He has kept the main story offstage, while the onstage action occurs in the kitchen, the domestic heart, where we abandon rituals of polite behavior and reveal our true personalities. He has had the action oscillate seamlessly between the imagined and the real, as we experience a protagonist's mental disintegration through her own increasingly chaotic viewpoint.

Bedroom Farce puts the bedrooms of three couples always in view, their private living spaces mercilessly exposed. A fourth couple separately bumbles among the others' bedrooms like two lovelorn Goldilocks trying to reconnect. Each bedroom they enter presents them a method of marriage—none of them perfect or even romantic, but all of them almost painfully commonplace.

Ayckbourn's farcical comedy depends not on extraordinary people, but on depressingly unexceptional souls thrust into outrageous circumstances—desperately trying to maintain their ordinariness. Tonight's particular comedy is bedroom farce inverted: with all the bed-hopping going on, nothing illicit happens. The play depicts not a steamy fantasy, but a comic nightmare in progress, and we all become peeping Toms. As he cheerfully throws the covers off marital relationships, he reveals not idealized models, but lumpy, familiar human souls, with feelings and needs common to us all.

We may not know Ayckbourn yet, but somehow he already knows us.

Alan Ayckbourn's Domesticity: Dour Depths and Comic Crafts

by Marion Bentley, director

Alan Ayckbourn is one of Britain's most popular and prolific playwrights. Writing for his own theatre in Scarborough, he eschews critical endorsement, counting instead on the public acclaim he regularly wins. He crafts his plays so that even the most dour, cynical observations engage audiences through rich, comical good humor and imaginative theatricality.

He has won particular praise for his innovative use of stage space and time. In the best of his plays, content and technique blend seamlessly, complementing each other with a precision and effectiveness that elevate them into the realm of the finest of English-language comedy.

Over the course of a long and successful career, his

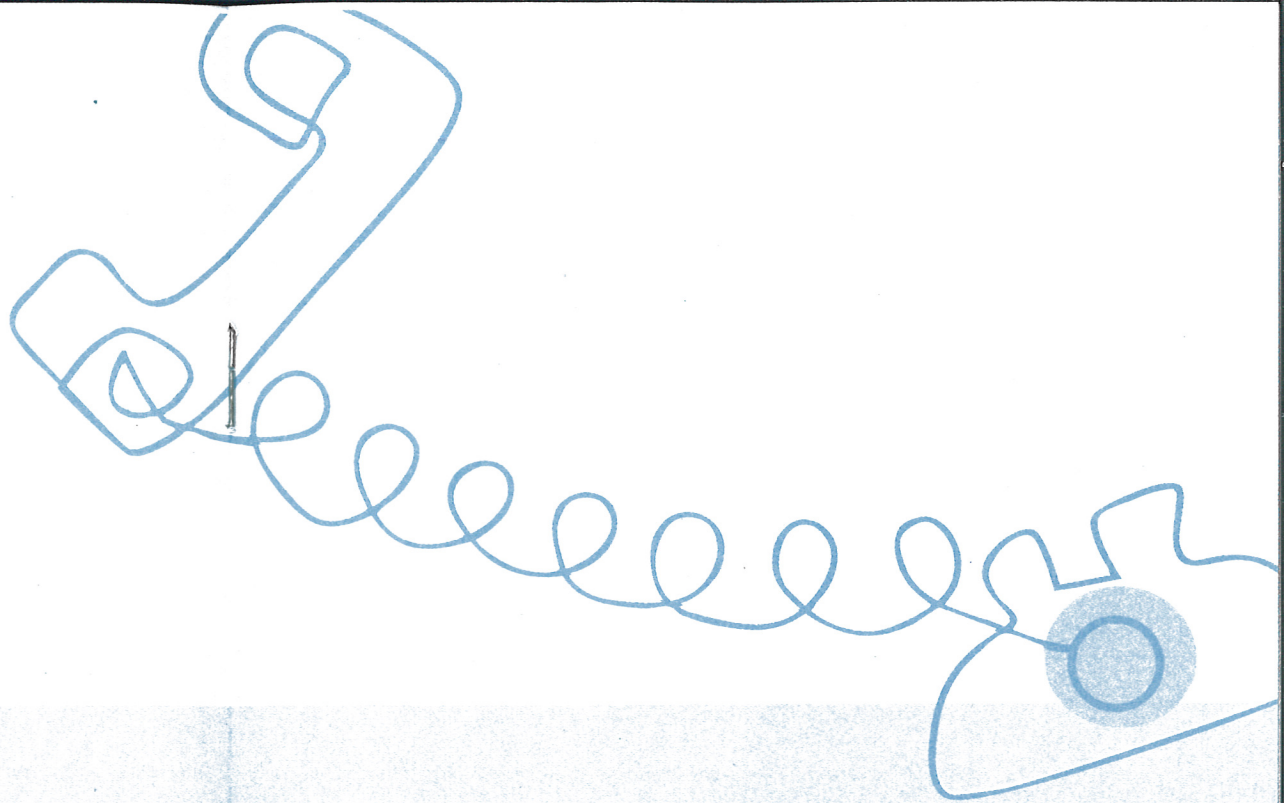
theatrical explorations have particularly focused on domestic issues, revealing sophisticated and unique insights into insensitivity in marriage, neediness or downright destructiveness in relationships, coping with failure and envy, and problems of living with an extended family.

Bedroom Farce constitutes one of Ayckbourn's earliest episodes in his running commentary on marital relationships and all their challenges. As is true of much of Ayckbourn's work, this play's title is simultaneously accurate and misleading. It is accurate in that the play focuses on what happens in the bedroom; and the play is full of comedy, including a little full-blown farce. But the title also misleads. There is none of the naughty "wink-wink, nudge-nudge" innuendo of the French bedroom

farces to which the title alludes. Indeed, the play's title is a central joke with serious undertones.

Bedroom Farce lines up in parallel formation the bedrooms of three couples in three separate households. Ayckbourn comically dismembers these couples as they are descended upon by yet a fourth couple beset by doubts, timidities, and chronic self-complication.

You may find that Ayckbourn's insights remind you of couples you know. If not, consider then emblematic of the expressed and suppressed desires of Britain's middle class. Bedroom Farce is one of Ayckbourn's sunniest and funniest plays. We hope that you find the evening you spend with his four married couples both entertaining and instructive.



The
COURSE
of
true
love
never
did
run
smooth.
—William Shakespeare

"A merging of two people is an impossibility; and where it seems to exist, it is a hemming-in, a mutual consent that robs one party or both parties of their fullest freedom and development. But once the realization is accepted that even between the closest people infinite distances exist, a marvelous living side-by-side can grow up for them, if they succeed in loving the expanse between them, which gives them the possibility of always seeing each other as a whole and before an immense sky."

—Rainer Maria Rilke

"Most married couples, even though they love each other very much in theory, tend to view each other in practice as large teeming flaw colonies, the result being that they get on each others' nerves and regularly erupt into vicious shouting matches over such issues as toaster settings." —Dave Barry

SONNET CXXX

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go:
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

—by William Shakespeare

"Love is an ideal thing, marriage a real thing; a confusion of the real with the ideal never goes unpunished." —Goethe

". . . those things never change, the social externals. We still get jealous, we still fall in love, we still get disappointed, there is always something in any of the plays when we say, well that's me or that's someone I know. . . . I think it's very important that theatre in the end, however many technical jinx you put into it, is really about the human being, about the people" —Alan Ayckbourn

The Company

AMY DAWN ADDAMS (Susannah), from Woodinville, WA, is pursuing a BFA in acting. Her credits include The Seagull, A Streetcar Named Desire, Lost Train to Nibroc, A Little Night Music, and The Physicists, all at the University of Utah.

MARION BENTLEY (Director), from St. George, UT, has attended the University of Utah, Stanford, Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, and London's Central School. His directing credits include The Secret Garden, The Merry Widow, Brigadoon, Hay Fever, Anything Goes, and Comedy of Errors.

MATT BIEDEL (Trevor), from Lake Oswego, OR, is pursuing a BFA in acting. His credits include The Last Night of Ballyhoo and Peachy for the Provo Theatre Company, and Goodbye Marianne at BYU. He has also appeared in several student films.

ANNE KIRKHAM BLACK (Assistant Scenic Designer), from Provo, is a theatre design major. She designed hair and makeup for The Cherry Orchard, and art directed several student films.

ARY FARAHNAKIAN (Nick), from Provo, is pursuing a BFA in acting. His credits include Azdak in Caucasian Chalk Circle, Yepikhodov in The Cherry Orchard, Lysander in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and the title role in Erasmus Montanus.

ERIC FIELDING (Scenic and Lighting Designer) is a scenic designer for BYU theatre. His work was recently seen in Caucasian Chalk Circle, Children of Eden, and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

RUTH GEILMAN (Makeup & Hair Designer), from Pleasant Grove, UT, is a theatre design and technology major. Most recently, she designed hair and makeup for Voices from Black Canyon. She designed costumes for Much Ado About Nothing and Three Women.

CASEY PAUL GRIFFITHS (Malcolm), from Delta, UT, is pursuing a degree in theatre arts and a job as a seminary teacher. His credits include A Love Affair with Electrons, The School for Scandal, Henry V, Private Lives, and Brigadoon.

DANIEL HESS (Ernest), from Salt Lake City, is a theatre graduate student. His latest credits include A Man for All Seasons as the Common Man. He works as a seminary teacher.

