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Absurd Person Singular

By Alan Ayckbourn / Directed by Marion Bentley

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Absurd Person Singular

by
Alan Ayckbourn
Director
Marion Bentley

Scenic Design
Eric Fielding
Costume Design
Rebecca Allred
Lisa Oliphant

Lighting Design
Eric Fielding
Sound Design
Christopher Wettstein

Assistant Director - Stage Manager
Megan Sanborn
Assistant Stage Manager
Doran L Smith

Light Board Operator/Keith Rex * Sound Technician/Steve Skousen
Dialect Coach/Julie Preece * Dressers/Kristi Youngman, Sherri Nelson
Properties/Shawnda Ludlow * Make-up & Hair/Shari Graham
Technical Crew/Valerie Heywood, Todd Wheeler, Andrew Shakespeare,
Wendy Karsh, Kimberly Bronson, Searls Webecke
Who's Who in the Cast

KIVA JUMP (Jane) is a former BYU student who is now attending the University of Utah. Kiva has had various roles including Izzy in Crossing Delancy, Trudy in Steel Magnolias, and Miss Priss in Candida. Kiva has returned to BYU to perform in one of her favorite plays.

ADAM HOUGHTON (Sidney) is a sophomore who hopes to pursue a career in dramatic criticism. His stage credits include The Dream Builder, Man and Superman, Black Comedy, The Price, Mother Hicks, and The Importance of Being Earnest at BYU.

ERIC SAMUELESEN (Ronald) is a new member of the BYU faculty. He graduated from BYU with a BA and earned a PhD from Indiana University. Eric is a playwright whose latest play, Accommodations, was recently produced at BYU.

SHANNYN S. THOMPSON (Marion) has recently returned to BYU after serving a mission in Czechoslovakia. Shannyn's acting credits include roles in Macbeth, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Diary of Anne Frank, Tale of Two Cities and Comedy of Errors.

STEPHANIE A. FOSTER (Eva) is in her fourth year at BYU majoring in Theatre and English. She was seen most recently as Alma in Mother Hicks and has also appeared in Pygmalion, Enemy of the People, The Price, and Man and Superman at BYU.

COREY EWAN (Geoffrey) is a student working towards a PhD in Theatre. He has appeared in View From the Bridge, Life With Father, Lepers, Room Service and Heubener and most recently directed the graduate production of Inherit the Wind at BYU.

MARION J. BENTLEY (Director) studied at the University of Utah, Stanford, and at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Central School, and London Academy of Music and Drama. He was the recipient of this year's College of Fine Arts Teaching Excellence Award and an Alcuin Fellowship. He is a specialist in dialects, diction, and directing. Among his directorial efforts are BYU productions of Peer Gynt, The Foreigner, Broadway in Concert, and Charley's Aunt.

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Jane  Kiva Jump

Sidney  Adam Houghton

Ronald  Eric Samuelesen

Marion  Shannyn S. Thompson

Eva  Stephanie A. Foster

Geoffrey  Corey Ewan

voice of Lottie  Sherri Nelson

voice of Dick  Jason Tatom, C. Haywood Bagley

ACT I  Sidney and Jane's Kitchen. Last Christmas.

* 5-minute intermission *

ACT II  Geoffrey and Eva's Kitchen. This Christmas.

* 5-minute intermission *

ACT III  Ronald and Marion's Kitchen. Next Christmas.
Absurdly Unknown, Singularly Personable

Alan who? If you have never heard the name Ayckbourn ("ACHE-born"), you are not alone. Although the works of this prolific playwright have played successfully in London almost perpetually for two 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 for being too "British." And theatre critics everywhere have dismissed him as merely "commercial." Yet future critics may proclaim Ayckbourn the most theatrically innovative playwright of the late twentieth century. In his fifty-plus plays, 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, provides him with 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 captivated fickle middle-class audiences on holiday by capturing the gist of their everyday problems with amusing, inventive style.

Ayckbourn's plays are anything but ordinary. 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 simultaneously telescopes two separate and unrelated dinner parties on one stage table, or compresses a house's three floors of disparate activities into one astonishing level. In Absurd Person Singular, the main action occurs in an offstage formal living room, and deals with characters we never see. The onstage action occurs in the kitchen, the domestic heart of life, where we abandon rituals of polite behavior and reveal our true personalities.

Much as Wilde did a century ago, Ayckbourn manages a peek beneath the social mask. And what he finds there are human souls, with feelings and needs common to us all. We may not yet know Ayckbourn yet, but somehow he already knows us.

— Nola Smith —

ABSURD PERSONS COLLECTIVE

Theatre audiences throughout the world enjoy the escape of laughter. When the laughter is aimed at our own follies and foibles it can be illuminating and instructive.

Alan Ayckbourn—in this and in other plays—highlights the challenge of marital relationships in which the partners, struggling to maintain their marriages, reflect an array of recognizable interactions that leave them "absurd persons singular." At the same time he affords a commentary on English class tensions as the characters change social and personal fortunes in the process of their Christmas exchange.

May your amusement with the characters and situations in tonight's play provide a social perspective as well as insight and sensitivity to the universal challenge of male/female relationships. Or you may merely sit back and enjoy our time together as "absurd persons collective."

— Marion Bentley, Director —

Producing Staff

Producer..........................Harold R. Oaks
Production Manager...........Rory R. Scanlon
Production Secretary.........Sherri Nelson
Technical Director............O. Lee Walker
Technical Assistant...........Brad Six
Properties Advisor.............O. Lee Walker
Costumer.........................Lisa Oliphant
Assistant Costumer...........Carolyn Smith
Stitcher..........................Jeffrey C. Cripple
Make-up and Wigs.............Shari Graham
Resident Stage Manager......David P. Knight
Master Electrician.............Cari Bertelson
Electrician......................Edward "Ted" Sharon
Master Carpenter..............Frank Weight
Scene Shop Crew..............Christian Guerler,
Mike Harmer, Blaine Sundrud,
Searles Webcke, Kristi Youngman,
Ed Armstrong
Scenic Artist....................Doran L. Smith
Marketing Director...........Jim Allman
Box Office.......................Traci Smith, Becky Brim
House Manager................Reed O'Conner,
Melissa Heaster
Publicity Advisor...............Bob Nelson
Program.........................Benjamin Sanders
Publicity.......................Nola Smith,
Charlene Winters
Publicity Photographer.......Mark Philbrick
Business Manager..............Britt Pearson
Accountant.....................John Boekweg

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