

Cause Célèbre

by TERENCE RATTIGAN

Produced by Special Arrangement
with SAMUEL FRENCH LTD.



Directed by
RON MASLIN

CAST

ALMA RATTENBURY
FRANCIS RATTENBURY
CHRISTOPHER RATTENBURY
IRENE RIGGS
GEORGE WOODS
EDITH DAVENPORT
JOHN DAVENPORT
TONY DAVENPORT
STELLA MORRISON
RANDOLPH BROWNE
JUDGE
MR. T. F. O'CONNOR, K.C.
MR. R. P. CROOM-JOHNSON, K.C.
K. D. CASWELL
MONTAGU
CLERK OF THE COURT
JOAN WEBSTER
SERGEANT BAGWELL
WARDER
PORTER
CORONER

Dorothy Gardner
Bob Knight
John Ommanney
Pamela Bland
Christopher Doeble
Betty Francis
Michael McNally
Stewart Wheeler
Lorraine Barner
Andrew Williams
Ron Maslin
Jim Ritchie
Laurence Thornton
Bob Hursey
Barrie Kirk
Earl McLaughlin
Paula Wilkie
Martin Haynes
John Acheson
John Acheson
Earl McLaughlin

The action of the play passes in Bournemouth and London
during 1934 and 1935

There will be one intermission of 20 minutes during which the bar will be open.

PRODUCTION STAFF

PRODUCER
SET DESIGN
SET AND FURNISHINGS CONSTRUCTION
STAGE MANAGERS
LIGHTING
SOUND
PROPERTIES
COSTUMES
SEAMSTRESSES
MAKE-UP
CONTINUITY
FRONT-OF-HOUSE
PUBLICITY
PUBLICITY PHOTOGRAPHS
BOX OFFICE
BAR (Located next to cafeteria)

Anmarie Copple
Ron Maslin
Tony Francis
Keith Raney
Al Fortin
Pat Legges
Mike Hack
Joan Ritchie
Gwendy Tolley
Paul Gardner
Anne Holland
Margaret Jardine
Brooke Kaneford
Eulron Williams
June Northcote
Doreen Boss
Adelle Vickers
Heleen Hunter
Anne Marwood
Ann Williams
Mary Holmes
Martha Holmes
Sally Raney
Rosemary Keneford
Dorothy Bock
Joan McLaughlin
Elsie Bryant
Rosemarie Lawless
Liane Freedman
Jenefer Haynes
Steve Sweet
Lynn Welsh
Tony Bryant

OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO

THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
MICHAEL LAVIGNE
JANETTE SABOURIN
BINKS, CHILCOTT & SIMPSON
SCOTT & AYLEN
TONY COPPLE
SCISSORS HAIR STUDIO
SEDBERGH SCHOOL

The published edition of the play
contains this note:

"This play was inspired by the facts
of a well known case, but the characters
attributed to the individuals represented
are based on the author's imagination,
and are not necessarily factual."

PLEASE NOTE

THE PLAY
"KEY FOR TWO"
IS UNAVAILABLE FOR PRODUCTION

IN ITS PLACE KANATA THEATRE
WILL PRESENT
"LIVING TOGETHER"
A FARCE BY
ALAN ACKBOURN

Cameras and recording equipment are not allowed
in the theatre

Kanata Theatre Next hit now in rehearsal

Barely catching their breath
after their recent smash hit,
"There Goes the Bride", Kanata
Theatre prepares for their next
production, Terence Rattigan's
"Cause Célèbre". This will be
presented at the Earl of March
School on February 27, 28 and
March 1 and 2, curtain 8 p.m.

A brilliantly written play, first
performed at Her Majesty's
Theatre, London in 1977, dram-
atically re-constructs an actual
murder trial which took place in
England during the 1930's.

Ron Maslin has chosen and
directs the large cast which
includes: Dorothy Gardner, Bob
Knight, John Ommanney, Pam
Bland, Chris Doeble, Betty
Francis, Mike McNally, Stewart
Wheeler, Lorraine Barner,
Andrew Williams, Ron Maslin,
Laurence Thornton, Jim Rit-
chie, Barrie Kirk, Bob Hursey,
Martin Haynes, Paula Wilkie,
John Acheson and Earl
McLaughlin.

Subscription ticket holders
please note the change in per-
formance dates. The play dates of
Feb. 27, 28, and March 1 and 2
are exactly one week earlier than
printed on your ticket.

If you wish to reserve a seat,
good ones are available, call the
box office, 592-1715.

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COMMUNITY

Kanata Theatre

Next production re-enacts '30s murder trial

by Lesley Chaff

Courtroom drama at its best
based on an actual murder trial
in the 1930's in England is the
next production of the Kanata
Theatre.

The victim was the architect
who designed such Canadian
Buildings as the famous Empress
Hotel in Victoria and the British
Columbia parliament buildings,
Francis Rattenbury, age 64. On
trial are his much younger wife,
Alma, age 38, and her even
younger lover, Percy, age 17.

The play is "Cause Célèbre" by
Terence Rattigan.

Director Ron Maslin almost
accidentally was able to obtain a
copy of the original trial trans-
cript and the memoirs of defence
lawyer K. D. Caswell. But Mas-
lin says the play is not intended
to be a complete recreation of
the murder or the trial.

"Real life is seldom very theat-
rical," Maslin said, "The play-
write has used to transcript. Some
of the dialogue is a direct quote."

Instead, says Maslin, the
playwrite has used the once scan-
dalous event to show what
happens when three families are
brought together in a court of
law and how they each are affected.
Those families include Alma and
her young son and those of their
household; the fictional head of
the jury, Edith Davenport and
her family; and the "family" of
the legal profession. And Maslin
is directing the play with the same

intent.
"Of course the actors are all
adding their own interpreta-
tions," he added. "Theatre must
be entertaining. Theatre is not a
museum."

One point Maslin says the
playwrite purposely does not
pay too much attention to, is
which of the two defendants is
actually guilty of the murder.

"Both Alma and Percy con-
fessed to the murder using the
same implement," Maslin said.
"A number of books have been
written since the trial trying to
determine if the verdict of the
jury was in fact right, but it's still
to this day not known for
certain."

February is traditionally a
holiday month for theatre goes
tired of the winter, but Maslin
says he isn't worried that will
mean a poor turnout for the play
scheduled for February 27 and
28 and March 1 and 2. He
expects the quality of the play
and the sheer drama of it will be
enough.

"It's well written, not a word
too many nor a word too few,
each perfectly chosen for effect,"
said Maslin.

Besides, it has all the makings
of a hit; murder, a love triangle,
sex, brilliant legal courtroom
maneuvers and well presented
characters. Not even Perry
Mason could do as well.



(l. to R) Bob Knight, Dorothy Gardner and Chris Doeble, at a Cause Célèbre rehearsal.



COMMUNITY

Theatre production quite 'entertaining'

by Leslie Jones

The Kanata Theatre's production of Terence Rattigan's "Cause Célèbre" wasn't exactly what many people expected. It was a lot better.

What could have easily turned out to be a rather boring recreation of a "semi-factual" murder trial held in England in the early 30's proved instead an interesting and very entertaining look at the characters behind the event. Although the play ran close to three hours in length, audience attention was easily held for the duration of the performance.

The main reason for the play's success was superb performances delivered by the theatre's cast. Of particular notice was Dorothy Gardner's excellent portrayal of the amoral, but likeable character of Alma Rattenbury—the middle aged mother accused of murdering her husband with a mallet. Gardner's sensitivity and insight brought the character alive on stage. Flashbacks between the trial day and the day of the murder were handled particularly well by the actors, not to mention a busy lighting crew.

Christopher Deeble, Alma Rattenbury's young lover, George Woods, was also quite effective in his role, and handled the transgression from "innocent

boy" to domineering and possessive lover very convincingly. His scenes with Gardner were a perfect balance of innocence and passion, and made their spring-summer affair wholly believable.

The sub-plot, involving the jury's foreman, Edith Davenport, played by Betty Francis, was also quite interesting. Davenport's performance, particularly in the last scene of the play, was quite effective, and brought a sense of public reaction to the scandal into focus.

Bob Hursey, as Mrs. Rattenbury's defence lawyer, K.D. Caswell, was also quite good, and added a touch of humour to the play with his back bench banter with crown attorney Croom-Johnson, played by Laurence Thornton. Although her part was relatively small, Paula Wilkie's portrayal of the wardress Joan Webster was outstanding. Her uncanny perception of the wardress' sense of humanity made her character one of the most notable performances of the evening.

All in all, the play was very well done and the set particularly well designed considering the complexity of the set changes. It was a commendable effort on the part of the theatre for bringing a difficult play to stage with such finesse.



Page D14, The Citizen, Ottawa, Thursday, February 28, 1985

Entertainment

Connecting thread missing in complicated play

By Audrey M. Ashley
Citizen staff writer

"Cause Célèbre" is not an easy play for an amateur company to tackle, and to a large extent its complications seem to have defeated the Kanata Theatre.

The late Terence Rattigan took as the basis for his play an actual case in which a woman and her lover were tried for the brutal murder of the woman's husband. He added to that the personal problems of a woman juror who asks to be excused from jury duty because of a deep prejudice against the accused, but whose request is denied.

The action of the play moves back and forth in time and place, so that sometimes we're in the present, sometimes in the past watching the relationship between the flighty Alma Rattenbury and George Woods, the 17-year-old boy she has taken in as general handyman.

It makes for confusion at the best of times, and unfortunately director Ron Maslin has not been able to find a way of clarifying things, nor of finding the vital connecting thread that would help us to find our way through this dramatic maze.

The unwieldy set design tends to add to the confusion, with the courtroom wrapped around a liv-

Theatre review

Cause Célèbre
Kanata Theatre
Earl of March High School
Feb. 27-March 2, 8 p.m.

ing-room space and topped by a bedroom; simplicity might have been a better goal to aim for. And on opening night things weren't helped by some erratic lighting.

The play calls for a large cast, and naturally there are varying levels of competence among the actors.

Dorothy Gardner has the central role of Alma Rattenbury, and she has grasped the basic idea of Alma's enigmatic character, but is ultimately done in by an unpleasant vocal shrillness.

Christopher Deeble manages George, her young protégé, quite well, and Betty Francis is good as the straight-laced, stiff-necked juror, Edith.

In the courtroom scenes Maslin himself is good as the judge, and there are some amusing moments from Jim Ritchie and Laurence Thornton as opposing legal eagles.

A particularly good job has been done on the costumes—something to brighten what begins to seem like an over-long evening. But generally speaking, it's back to the drawing-board for this production.





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