

THE MATCHMAKER

this farce's history is more complex than any other modern play's, except possibly for that of "dear charles," which was derived from an english play that was derived from a french play that was derived from an american play.

the origin of "THE MATCHMAKER" was traced by thornton wilder to "a day well spent," by john oxenford, an englishman, that was produced in london in 1835, and apparently with enough success then to warrant the script having been preserved. then an austrian named johann nestroy, who was a viennese version in his time of abe burrows, or jack-of-all-funny-theatrical-trades of his day, turned oxenford's farce into a german-language version that he called "einen jux will er sich machen" ("he wants to make a joke"). this was in 1842.

ninety-six years later, in 1938, thornton wilder made a new version of the old farce that he called "the merchant of yonkers," and it was presented in new york, with a cast that included jane cowl as mrs. levi, percy waram as vandergelder, tom ewell as cornelius, june walker as mrs. molloy, nydia westman as minnie fay. this production fared poorly and achieved a run of only five weeks.

wilder kept fooling around with the play, off and on, for years after this failure. he and the noted english director, tyrone guthrie, and actress ruth gordon, combined to put it on in his latest revised version at the international drama festival at edinburgh (scotland) in august 1954, and there it scored a huge hit-- so much so that this edinburgh cast was then brought to london for a regular run in november of that year.

the london presentation of "THE MATCHMAKER" was a big hit that ran for over eight months, beginning november 4, 1954, it received unanimous praise, and everybody wondered why the play that now seemed so wonderfully delightful had seemed so dull in 1938. it opened in new york december 5, 1955.

the show drew throngs of theatre-goers for over a year and continued in new york for a total of 489 performances through february 2, 1957. it was then toured with equal success to major cities. in chicago, for example, the original booking of four weeks was so well-received that the run there was extended to eight weeks.

paramount tinkered a bit with "THE MATCHMAKER" in making a film version. the film was a popular and critical success with shirley booth (mrs. levi), anthony perkins (cornelius), shirley maclaine (miss molloy), paul ford (vandergelder) and robert morse (barnaby).

and then in 1964 came the blockbuster musical version, "hello, dolly!"-- book by michael stewart, music and lyrics by jerry herman-- which ran nearly seven years, for a record-breaking 2,844 performances in new york, and with comparable success all over the world. in new york carol channing was dolly, david burns was horace, eileen brennan was mrs. molloy. in the film version of the musical, barbara streisand was dolly, walter matthau was horace.

THEATRE

presents

THE

MATCHMAKER

November 2, 3, 4, 5, 1977

McNair Auditorium

8:00 p.m.

thornton wilder's

THE MATCHMAKER

horace vanderghelder david o'neil *
ambrose kemper michael buckles *
joe scanlon pat sowell *
gertrude marilyn barnes
cornelius hackt tom schuster
ermengarde darlene martin
malachi stack greg dennison *
mrs. levi cynthia warden *
barnaby tucker bob schuster
mrs. molloy tricia ham *
minnie fay cheryl hinson *
cabman philip tuck
rudolf lonnie connor *
august jim rose
miss van huysen denise richbourg
cook pam church

scene synopsis

the time. 1880's

act i

vanderghelder's office- living room in yonkers, n.y.; 9:00 a.m

act ii

mrs. molloy's hat shop, new york: that afternoon

10 minute intermission

act iii

the harmonia gardens restaurant on the battery: 4:00 p.m.

act iv

miss van huysen's home: later that night

the college theatre requests that no photographs be taken
during the performance

*member of alpha psi omega - national dramatics honorary fraternity

production staff

director d. c. sanderson
assistant director meg norwood
technical director and scenic designer s. l. moore
lighting control lanney schultz
stage carpenters susan early *
. michael buckles *
. cynthia warden *
set construction sarah bindewald, lonnie connor *
. suzanne cox, greg dennison *
. mike fowler, jeanne howard
. ann hurell, paula mozingo
. jim rose, william strickland
. teddy tarlton, hazel thomas
. pam thomason, hilda woodrum
hair styling chris logan beauty college

THE MATCHMAKER

is produced by special arrangement with
samuel french, inc.
25 west 45th street
new york, n. y.

a special thanks to

o neil's antiques shirley mac's house of beauty
stuckey brothers and knight furniture

future florence area theatre productions

november 11-19 deane and balderston's, dracula
florence little theatre, 8:00
december 16-18 sam and bella spewack's, my three angels
florence little theatre, 8:00
february 22-25 tennessee williams', the glass menagerie
francis marion college theatre, 8:00