



THE MUSICAL COMEDY
MURDERS
OF 1940

by John Bishop

Directed and costumed by Catherine Baumgardner

February 22, 23, 24, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

Matinee February 25, 2024 at 2 p.m.

Fulks Theatre

Statement of Mission

The Abilene Christian University Department of Theatre is committed to providing quality training and opportunity for the disciplined theatre artist in a nurturing environment that models Christian values.

Cast

Helsa Wenzel.....	Hannah Galambos
Elsa Von Grossenknueten.....	Zola Feasel
Nikki Crandall.....	Bee Peyton
Marjorie Baverstock.....	Patti Maisano
Bernice Roth.....	Courtney String
Sgt. Michael Kelly.....	Caleb Shields
Ken De La Maize.....	Ben Polk
Patrick O'Reilly.....	Malachi Havens
Roger Hopewell.....	Ashton Taylor
Eddie McCuen.....	James Bradshaw

Understudies/Swings

For Helsa Wendell: Zoe Dobratz; **For Elsa Von Grossenknueten:** Ainsley Houghton;
For Nikki Crandall: Ainsley Houghton; **For Majorie Baverstock:** Gabi Collins;
For Bernice Roth: Zoe Dobratz; **For Sgt. Michael Kelly:** Spencer Kasselmann;
For Roger Hopewell: Collin Mitten; **For Eddie McCuen:** Jackson Wilder

Production Staff

Producer.....	Dawne Swearingen Meeks
Director.....	Catherine Baumgardner
Director of Design.....	Eric Pitney
Scenic Designer.....	Gary Varner
Costume Designer.....	Catherine Baumgardner

Production Staff Cont.

Lighting Designer.....	Kinsey Herbel
Associate Lighting Designer.....	Josh Hervey
Sound Designer.....	Sarah Gabel
Sound Engineer.....	Téa Merchant
Technical Director.....	Andrew Wheeler
Prop Master.....	Layla Rorem
Props Team.....	Brooke Musia, Maya Padilla
Hair & Makeup Designer.....	Catherine Baumgardner
Wig Stylist.....	Nora Vellis
Assistant Director.....	Caitlin Martin
Assistant Technical Director.....	Zeke Merchant
Scenic Charge Artist.....	Karis Cox
Stage Manager.....	Mikayla Condra
Tuesday Stage Manager.....	Skyler Kinney
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Denim Atkins, Kenna White
Shop Foreman.....	Kayla Brookshire, Zola Feasel, Josh Hervey, Skyler Kinney, Kinsey Herbel, Ty Naicker, Collin Mitten, Brooke Musia, Layla Rorem
Key Costume Shop Assistant.....	Rachel McNiece
Costume Shop Assistants.....	Brooke Bott, Lila Griffith, Ainsley Houghton, Matthew Lietz, Gabi Lopez, Patti Maisano, Bee Peyton, Truth Pierce, Chaya Powell, Courtney String, Will Thompson
Costume Crew.....	Matthew Lietz, Gabi Lopez, Chaya Powell
Backstage Crew.....	Kayla Brookshire, Kendall Ganster
Dramaturg.....	Caitlin Martin
Box Office/Patron Services Director.....	Devin Braswell
Program Designer.....	Chloe Munson
Program Cover Design	Holly Harrell
Production Photographer.....	Paul White
Program / Publicity / Web Design.....	Adam Hester, Chloe Munson

Acknowledgments

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
Produced on Broadway by Bill Wildin.
Originally produced by the Circle Repertory Company, New York City.

ACU Student Practicums (Set, Costume, Box Office/PR)
Chris Hollingsworth
Rick Piersall
Abilene High School Theatre Department & Kyle Martin

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Study Guide
By Caitlin Martin



Director's Note

I first read *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* in 1995. And I laughed. A lot.

And I really wanted others to experience the same thing. So, after my high school graduation, I spent that summer of '96 getting some friends together and we put on a no-budget production at the Grace Museum. I asked an Abilene door company to donate French doors. And they did! They helped class up my cardboard walls. We used paint donated from a local paint supply store because no one wanted it. So, pink striped cardboard walls it was! The show turned more into a "Comedy of Errors" than a "Comedy of Murders," but we had a blast and seven of the ten cast members went on to get theatre degrees from ACU!

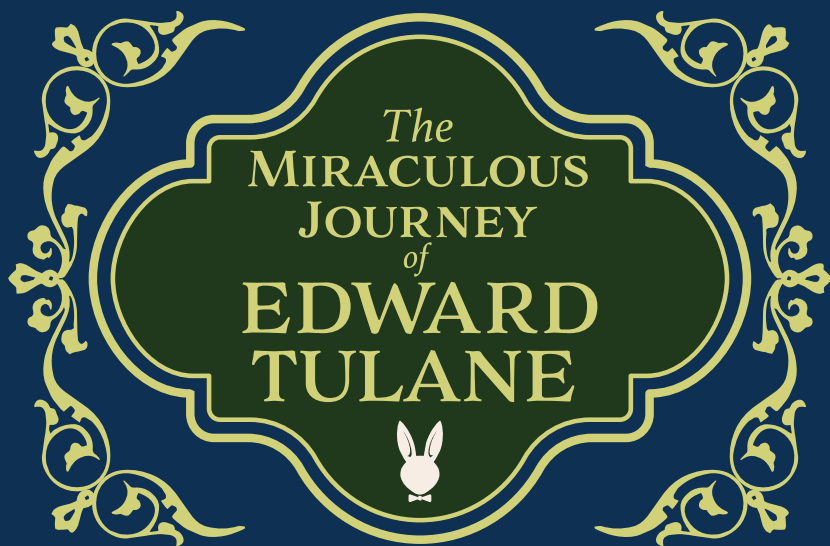
I took that endeavor on at the age of 18 because theatre and film are special art mediums to me. They can take people on an emotional journey from the safety of their chair. They are windows into another world that can give you a break from your circumstance and give you empathy for another's. You can weep on your couch without personally being a castaway on an island; you can join in the battle cry of "FREEDOM!" but not experience the personal sacrifice; or you can laugh so hard you forget about your own life-struggles for two hours. And hopefully you walk away with a new perspective and lifted spirit.

Different genres create different experiences. For me, there is something about a good laugh and fun mystery that warms my heart. In John Truby's book *The Anatomy of Genres*, he writes about the seeking and revealing of truth being a fundamental part of the mystery genre. As a Christian, this echoes deep in my heart. God has written upon our heart to know Truth and to seek out Truth. I think that is why the mystery or "riddle to be solved" draws people in. We were meant to seek and know the Truth. He has wired us for this journey... to seek and know Truth.

That being a bit of the background of my journey with this script, I wanted to direct *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* for you. To provide laughter, a break from the world and your personal struggles, and lead you to think about what it is to have Truth revealed to you wherever you are in life. I hope you enjoy the journey for Truth echoed in this play today, as it has for me since 1995.

Catherine Baumgardner
Class of 2000

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