

SCMP - 6 JUNE '56

STANDARD - 13 AUG. '56

GARRISON PLAYERS

Season Of Ups And Downs Ends Very Well

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

The Garrison Players held their annual general meeting in the Green Room of the Missions to Seamen yesterday.

The out-going Chairman, Mr E. O'Neil Shaw, said, "We have come to the end of a season of ups and downs, but I think you will all agree that whatever the setbacks we may have encountered during the year, we have finished well in the up-

and-up in something like a piece of glory." During the meeting the past season's receipts and payments were passed and officials for the new season were elected.

In his report Mr O'Neil Shaw said, in part:

"We have come to the end of a season of ups and downs. But I think you will agree with me that whatever the setbacks we may have encountered during the year, we have finished well on the up-and-up in something like a blaze of glory (applause). Four

plays were produced during the year: 'Tons of Money', 'Love from a Stranger', 'The Circle' and 'Seagulls Over Sorrento'. Owing to an abrupt change in tenure of the office of Hon Treasurer during the year, it is not possible to present detailed statements of receipts and expenditure covering the first two plays, but it is almost certain that a profit, if only a small one, was made on each production.

Outstanding Success
"So far as the last two are concerned, 'Seagulls over Sorrento' was an outstanding

financial success, with a net profit of over \$1,000, and we were even able to make a small profit of approximately \$350 on 'The Circle'—which is a highly gratifying result, considering that the play was only presented for three nights instead of the usual four, and one of these presentations broke new ground in being made in Kowloon (as a special feature of the Arts Festival for which this was our special production)—a venture entailing an extra actual cash expenditure of something like \$575 all told. Anyway, for the period February 1 to May 31 we are able to show an excess of income over expenditure of more than \$900—which, I think you will agree, is a very gratifying result. Our funds in hand at the commencement of the period amounted to \$2,175.86, out of which we paid certain outstanding royalties and expenses amounting to \$547.47, and the balance of \$1,648.39 added to our excess of income over expenditure of \$935.38 gives us funds in hand of the very satisfactory sum of just over \$2,500 with which to begin the new season under the management of a new Committee."

Office Bearers
Office bearers elected were: Chairman, Captain Colin MacCallum-Stewart; Secretary, Major N. Evans; Treasurer, Mrs J. Rogers; Business Manager, Miss Mollie Crosbie, Radio member, Lt Gary Crook. The general committee, Major J. Rogers, Mr John Peam, Major R. Webb and Mr Mario Ferras.

yers Launch New Season

ARTISTIC SPICE

K. C. Harvey

WITH a brand-new committee and a liberal dash of enthusiasm, The Garrison Players have embarked upon the new season's activities. Home leave and postings take their toll in this Colony and the only remaining member of the 1955-1956 committee who continues for a further year (or more) is Mario Ferras.

Of the new committee, the majority are well-known, having been established here over months or years, but there are one or two fledglings to Hongkong and its non-professional stage.

CHAIRMAN is Colin MacCallum-Stewart, who made his debut with the Players in stage roles last season. Colin is of sturdy Scottish ancestry and has the forthright characteristics of most likeable and progressive Scots. Under his guidance, the committee should do well.

Neville Evans, remembered for his useful work in the Players' radio play productions, is the Secretary; Mollie Crosbie, another stalwart of stage and back-stage, takes over as Business Manager; John and Gladys Rogers handle, respectively, "Lectrics" and Treasurer. It should be a powerful team.

FOR the Record: The Players' secretary resides at 5, Staplehurst, Perth Street, Kowloon; so write to him if you have any queries or concrete suggestions. The Treasurer (and the "Lectrics" representative) reside at 2, Sandhurst, Perth Street, Kowloon. The Treasurer, Mrs. Rogers, would be delighted to hear from everyone interested in the Players—and, I imagine, would be even more interested in receiving from all concerned that modest, annual subscription of HK\$2.

THE Garrison Players' future activities include plans for regular readings of selected plays—"off the cuff readings with no stage, props or rehearsals..." Gladys Rogers has volunteered to run the first on Tuesday, Sept. 18, at the Missions to Seamen (at 8 p.m.). "Do come along," says the invitation; "we want all the support we can get."

The play selected for this reading is *His Excellency*. "Get Together" evenings are planned by the Players. The idea is that everyone interested shall meet at the Missions to Seamen, to listen collectively (and criticize) our own radio plays; also to discuss, in retrospect, our stage plays."

IT had been hoped to produce *The Happy Marriage* by John Clements, but the play has not yet been made available for Hongkong. The Players have substituted *Ten Little Niggers* (presumably the Agatha Christie version) which has been staged here within recent years. Although hardly an inspired choice, it is a play worth repeating. Colin MacCallum Stewart will produce. The Casting Meeting is on Tuesday, Aug. 21, at the Missions to Seamen (8 p.m.). Please note the date—and keep it!

IAM told that the other three plays to be presented by the Players this season will be selected from *His Excellency*, *Black Limelight*, *A Question of Fact*, *Fly Away Peter*—and the Emlyn Williams epic, *Night Must Fall*.

IWOULD welcome advance information regarding seasonal activities from the remainder of our stage groups. Will the Stage Club, Linden Players, Kai Tak Players, and others, write to me, c/o The Hongkong Standard, 108, Windsor House? Due prominence will be given to forthcoming stage events and other interesting happenings in the Colony.

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SCMP - 15 AUG '56

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SCMP - 13 + 20 AUG '56

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WILL HOLD AN

AUDITION

FOR A

RADIO PLAY

(A COMEDY CALLED "FIFTY PIGS")

at

8.30 P.M.

MONDAY, 3 SEPT., 1956

in the

CONCERT HALL RADIO H.K.

(6th floor Electra House)

There are six male and five female parts

The Garrison Players

will hold a

PLAY READING

(not a casting meeting)

OF

"HIS EXCELLENCY"

at

THE MISSIONS TO SEAMEN

on

Tuesday, 18th Sept. 1956, at 8 p.m.

OLD AND NEW MEMBERS WILL BE WELCOME

SCMP 17 ~~Aug~~ SEPT '56

SCMP - 6 JUNE '56

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SCMP #7 ~~17~~ SEPT '56

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OF

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on

Tuesday, 18th Sept. 1956, at 8 p.m.

OLD AND NEW MEMBERS WILL BE WELCOME

GARRISON PLAY

"And Then There Were None"

O.A.G. TO ATTEND

The Garrison Players' "Ten Little Niggers" to be advertised as "And then there were none" is to appear at the Missions to Seamen on October 10, 11, 12, and 13, with a free show for the Forces on October 9.

His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government is to attend the October 10 performance and Commodore J. H. Unwin the October 12 performances.

The radio play "Fifty Pigs" has been recorded and will be broadcast on October 17.

The Club is having its first Club Night on October 17 with the object of listening to the radio play, criticising the stage play and being entertained by Mr Neville Edwards, a member of the Magic Circle.

Mr Eric O'Neil Shaw has had to drop out of the cast of "Ten Little Niggers" owing to illness. The next play, due to take place in December, will be "Fly Away Peter," a light family comedy with some good juicy parts. Gladys Rogers will be producing.

The Club has been asked to run a Christmas entertainment for the "livers in" at the Missions to Seamen. Last year the entertainment took the form of a social evening. This year will depend on the response from members.

Thursday, Oct. 11, 1956.
Hongkong Tiger Standard

CORRESPONDENCE

Changed Title

(To the Editor, S.C.M. Post)

Sir,—We see that the Garrison Players are opening their 1956/57 season by presenting "And Then There Were None" by Agatha Christie. What a pity that it was thought fit to change the name from the original "Ten Little Niggers," which surely must be a very well-known title in theatrical circles; one wonders whether in taking such action, those responsible gave any thought to the possibility of bookings being the poorer as a result. There must be many who would pay to see a well-known play such as "Ten Little Niggers," but who would perhaps think twice about anything as unknown as "And Then There Were None." For the Garrison Players' sake, I hope that I am wrong.

I understand from a member of the Players that the name has been changed in order to avoid any possibility of giving offence; whilst this in itself is praiseworthy, I feel that in these enlightened days, and particularly in this Colony, such action is hardly necessary. As I have said, I hope that this alteration will not dissuade people from going to see the play; Hongkong cannot afford to do without the Garrison Players or the Stage Club, who between them do so much to give us live entertainment.

R.A.D.A.

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present

"AND THEN THERE WERE NONE"

A PLAY

by

AGATHA CHRISTIE

at

ST. GEORGE'S HALL,
THE MISSIONS TO SEAMEN

AT 8.30 P.M.

OCT. 10th, 11th, 12th & 13th

BOOKING AT SKINNER'S

It was considered that the title "Ten little niggers" would give offence to US coloured sailors who use the Missions to Seamen. The play was therefore advertised as shown above.

Play Opening In Spite Of Cast Setbacks

By K. C. HARVEY
Standard Music Critic

Plays and Players have their testing troubles and it's an old saying in show business that when rehearsals go the hard way and when sickness takes its toll with a cast, a successful outcome invariably follows.

I am convinced that The Garrison Players, who have been encouraging a good deal of misfortune in casting and rehearsing their opening play of the season, "And Then There Were None," the Agatha Christie stage version of the best-seller thriller, "Ten Little Niggers," will find it that way.

The play opens at the Missions to Seamen Theatre tomorrow, for a four-day run, preceded by a free presentation for members of the Forces today.

From Producer Colin MacCallum Stewart I have received an encouraging progress report on the current situation. Rehearsals are now well advanced, he tells me, and the major problems have been overcome.

Cast Replacement

Eric O'Neil Shaw, who would have played General MacKenzie, had to withdraw, owing to an illness which sent him to hospital. His replacement in the cast took over for a few rehearsals, then felt he was not equal to the part and withdrew. On Thursday, Peter Quickmire, an old member of the Players, agreed to take over. MacCallum Stewart's wife, who was playing Mrs. Rogers, also had to leave the cast through indisposition and has been replaced by Mavis Matthews.

It all sounds in keeping with the theme of the "Ten Little Niggers" . . . "and then there were none . . ." (almost), but with that characteristic bull-dog breed whereby a certain island country is hall-marked, the problems have been surmounted and the Producer reports that things are going well.

The leading lady of "And Then There Were None" is Mary Norris, a newcomer; that Colony stalwart of our stage groups, Mollie Crosbie, who portrays Miss Brent, is said to be a natural for the role of Miss Brent.

When the curtain rings on this Garrison Players' season-opener, an appreciative audience will, I am sure, give a fitting ovation to a much respected cast which is taking the bit between its teeth, determined that this time-honoured play shall get over in a big way.

SCMP-11 OCT '56

THE GARRISON PLAYERS

"And Then There Were None"

CRITICS WARNED

(By ALEC M. HARDIE)

Last night The Garrison Players opened the dramatic season with a warning to all critics; misunderstandings and good intentions can lead to disaster, and having risen from a sick bed I must advise to my friends that if I am found dead, please investigate all members of the Garrison Theatre. Their casual manner is no alibi.

Friends! With the rising of the curtain I ceased to have any friends in the Colony. During the Summer an armed truce existed. Gradually I was able to meet the enthusiastic dramatic players and producers without first searching them or smelling my drink. Their ferocity had lessened as they began the conversation "I don't care what you say BUT." Even the glinting eyes had lost much of their slaying power.

BUT from now on for the next seven months war exists; the critic is the natural enemy of all true amateurs. Like the innocents on Miss Christie's island they have to be prepared for any underhand attack.

I have been in the company of at least one potential murderer, I think, but never have I been so unfortunate as to have been enclosed with ten on one small island (much smaller than Hongkong and all confined to one house). I suspect that I should be afraid and resort to all kinds of fear, emotions, regrets and terrified reactions. Not so our stalwarts of the Garrison Theatre; never have there been such a cool collection of people under the sentence of death since the Scarlet Pimpernel's French Revolution.

Let us begin by blaming Miss Agatha Christie, for she is far away, I hope, from Hongkong; and her story is even further, and the stage-craft further still. She resembles ten people on an island, all with possibly murky and doubtful pasts, all with crimes much more reprehensible from harsh dramatic criticism. Some are suspected of murder, not of characters but of real people!

Clearly a self-appointed avenger is at work, and using the rhyme of "Ten Little Nigger Boys" this Nemesis intends to eliminate them all one by one. Do not believe that the success of this thriller is to depend on thrills coming from the stage—thrills, or tension! Both are equally boring to our self-possessed cast (I feel a shiver when I think of their undisguised personalities). When suddenly an unknown voice from a hidden microphone announces their evil deeds, how calm, how British they are at the news! One dashing young Army Captain nonchalantly kept his hands in his pockets for all three acts! The most they can do is to stroll across the stage and back again at suitable intervals—intervals dictated less by the script, I suspect, than their desire for exercise.

Let us continue to blame the mercifully absent author. She offers little action, and the dialogue is not easily worked up into suspense; it is a thriller which reads well as a novel, but offers little help to the actor.

Jim Howe as Rogers the Butler fought bitterly with his words but Mavis Matthews as his wife was in a hurry to be eliminated. John Le Mare's Anthony Marston had to give a sketch of Cambridge imbecility, but I never believed that he could drive any car at eighty

miles an hour without destroying himself within the first mile. I was satisfied that I had gone to Oxford when he drank his whisky too quickly (warning: how did the cyanide get into the glass?)

Peter Quickmire as General MacKenzie spoils the casual atmosphere by being almost credible; pathos had been allowed to creep into his part and he accepted it with considerable conviction. Sorry he went so soon. Mollie Crosbie was severe but unvarying as the righteous spinster; in such company to continue to knit until death was not a bad occupation. Vive la tricolore!

When my nerves are worn out as they will be soon I shall not ask Dr Armstrong for help as Patrick Hughes portrayed him. We must not joke about the nerves of nerve-specialists, Miss Christie! One of the first essentials for nerves is, I understand, to relax. Do relax, Dr Armstrong!

Mystery Play Scores With Its Suspense

By K.C. HARVEY
Standard Drama Critic

Agatha Christie's tense thriller, "Ten Little Niggers," in its stage play form, provides over two hours of breathtaking suspense. It is a production that has aged in the wood; time has not dimmed its realism and brilliance. Last night, at the Missions to Seamen, The Garrison Players revived this fascinating "Who dunnit?" and although the play was present under the banner of "And Then There Were None"—it had been suggested by someone that susceptibilities might be offended if the original title were used. (1)—Agatha Christie's crime story was put over with ringing conviction.

Taking the play and the players on face value, overlooking the relevant fact that producer and cast had faced many a setback, Producer MacCallum Stewart and his players have good reason to be heartened by audience reaction to their stalwart efforts.

Polished Performance

The play—which had a preview presentation to the Forces on Tuesday night—was staged last night in the presence of His Excellency The Officer Administering the Government, Mr. E.B. David. Such a polished performance by the players in general was worthy of a capacity audience, yet the little Theatre was barely half-filled. It is heartening to learn that there is a sell-out expected for Saturday night; meanwhile I earnestly trust that lovers of the legitimate stage will rally in support of the play, by ensuring capacity houses to-night, tomorrow and on Saturday.

It was easy to find the seasoned players. The performance of Neville Evans was beautifully timed and evaluated, the climatic build up being in perfect accord with the situation. Mary Norris gave a professional ring to her difficult role and the tense sequences were superbly handled. John Little tended to overdraw his role by a too profound sense of the dramatic; yet at times his evaluation was smooth and skilful.

True To Character

Peter Quickmire won my admiration for his venerable, intensely true-to-character portrayal and Mollie Crosbie dovetailed neatly into the pattern of a hypocritical spinster who gloated, with religious fervour, over her supposition that she had "nothing" on her conscience.

And then there were five. Of the other players, Jim Howe, John Izod, John Le Mare, Mavis Matthews and Patrick Hughes combined effectively to round off a sound cast. Outside the Ten Little Niggers there was Jean Mackintosh with a bit part for good measure.

If you enjoy a thrill-permeant, don't miss this play!



OAG ATTENDS PLAY THRILLER—His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. E. B. David (in background) last night attended the Garrison Players' version of Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None." In foreground are Mrs. G. Rogers and Mrs. C. MacBullem. The play was held at the Missions to Seamen.—Standard Photo by T. H. Ching, Staff Photographer.

SCMP 29 SEPT '56

OCT 10 '56

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Cast Replacement

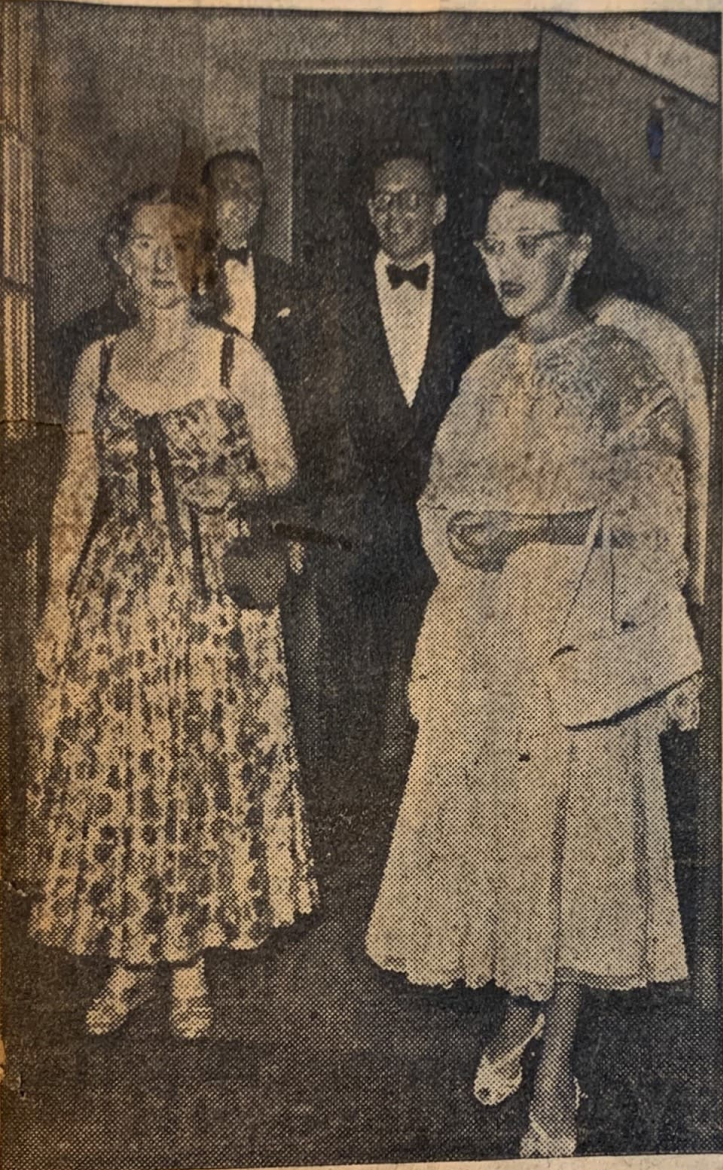
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When the curtain rings on on this Garrison Players' season-opener, an appreciative audience will, I am sure, give a fitting ovation to a much reshuffled cast which is taking the bit between its teeth, determined that this time-honoured play shall get over in a big way.



OAG ATTENDS PLAY THRILLER—His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. E. B. David (in background) last night attended the Garrison Players' version of Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None." In foreground are Mrs. G. Rogers and Mrs. C. MacBullem. The play was held at the Missions to Seamen.—Standard Photo by T. H. Ching, Staff Photographer.

Mystery Play Scores With Its Suspense

By K.C. HARVEY
Standard Drama Critic

Agatha Christie's tense thriller, *Ten Little Niggers*, in its stage play form, provides over two hours of breathtaking suspense. It is a production that has aged in the wood; time has not dimmed its realism and brilliance. Last night, at the Missions to Seamen, The Garrison Players revived this fascinating "Who dunnit?" and although the play was present under the banner of "And Then There Were None"—it had been suggested by someone that susceptibilities might be offended if the original title were used (!)—Agatha Christie's crime story was put over with ringing conviction.

Taking the play and the players on face value, overlooking the relevant fact that producer and cast had faced many a setback, Producer MacCallum Stewart and his players have good reason to be heartened by audience reaction to their stalwart efforts.

Polished Performance

The play—which had a preview presentation to the Forces on Tuesday night—was staged last night in the presence of His Excellency The Officer Administering the Government, Mr. E.B. David. Such a polished performance by the players in general was worthy of a capacity audience, yet the little Theatre was barely half-filled. It is heartening to learn that there is a sell-out expected for Saturday night; meanwhile I earnestly trust that lovers of the legitimate stage will rally in support of the play, by ensuring capacity houses to-night, tomorrow and on Saturday.

It was easy to find the seasoned players. The performance of Neville Evans was beautifully timed and evaluated, the climatic build up being in perfect accord with the situation. Mary Norris gave a professional ring to her difficult role and the tense sequences were superbly handled. John Little tended to overdraw his role by a too profound sense of the dramatic; yet at times his evaluation was smooth and skilful.

True To Character

Peter Quickmire won my admiration for his venerable, intensely true-to-character portrayal and Molly Crosbie dovetailed neatly into the pattern of a hypocritical spinster who gloated, with religious fervour, over her supposition that she had "nothing" on her conscience.

And then there were five . . . Of the other players, Jim Howe, John Izod, John Le Mare, Mavis Matthews and Patrick Hughes combined effectively to round off a sound cast. Outside the *Ten Little Niggers* there was Iain Mackintosh with a bit part for good measure.

If you enjoy a thrill-per-minute, don't miss this play!



THE GARRISON PLAYERS

"And Then There Were None"

CRITICS WARNED

(By ALEC M. HARDIE)

Last night The Garrison Players opened the dramatic season with a warning to all critics; misunderstandings and good intentions can lead to disaster, and having risen from a sick bed I must advertise to my friends that if I am found dead, please investigate all members of the Garrison Theatre. Their casual manner is no alibi.

Friends? With the rising of the curtain I ceased to have any friends in the Colony. During the Summer an armed truce existed. Gradually I was able to meet the enthusiastic dramatic players and producers without first searching them or smelling my drink. Their ferocity had lessened as they began the conversation "I don't care what you say BUT." Even the glinting eyes had lost much of their slaying power.

BUT from now on for the next seven months war exists; the critic is the natural enemy of all true amateurs. Like the innocents on Miss Christie's island they have to be prepared for any underhand attack.

I have been in the company of at least one potential murderer, I think, but never have I been so unfortunate as to have been enclosed with ten on one small island (much smaller than Hongkong and all confined to one house!). I suspect that I should be afraid and resort to all kinds of fear, emotions, regrets and terrified reactions. Not so our stalwarts of the Garrison Theatre; never have there been such a cool collection of people under the sentence of death since the Scarlet Pimpernet's French Revolution.

Let us begin by blaming Miss Agatha Christie, for she is far away, I hope, from Hongkong; and her story is even further, and the stage-craft further still. She assembles ten people on an island, all with possibly murky and doubtful pasts, all with crimes much more reprehensible from harsh dramatic criticism. Some are suspected of murder, not of characters but of real people!

Clearly a self-appointed avenger is at work, and using the rhyme of "Ten Little Nigger Boys" this Nemesis intends to eliminate them all one by one. Do not believe that the success of this thriller is to depend on thrills coming from the stage—thrills, or tension! Both are equally boring to our self-possessed cast (I feel a shiver when I think of their undisguised personalities). When suddenly an unknown voice from a hidden microphone announces their evil deeds, how calm, how British they are at the news! One dashing young Army Captain nonchalantly kept his hands in his pockets for all three acts! The most they can do is to stroll across the stage and back again at suitable intervals—intervals dictated less by the script, I suspect, than their desire for exercise.

Let us continue to blame the mercifully absent author. She offers little action, and the dialogue is not easily worked up into suspense; it is a thriller which reads well as a novel, but offers little help to the actor.

Jim Howe as Rogers the Butler fought bitterly with his words, but Mavis Matthews as his wife was in a hurry to be eliminated. John Le Mare's Anthony Marston had to give a sketch of Cambridge imbecility, but I never believed that he could drive any car at eighty

miles an hour without destroying himself within the first mile. I was satisfied that I had gone to Oxford when he drank his whisky too quickly (warning: how did the cyanide get into the glass?).

Peter Quickmire as General MacKenzie spoilt the casual atmosphere by being almost credible; pathos had been allowed to creep into his part and he accepted it with considerable conviction. Sorry he went so soon. Molly Crosbie was severe but unvarying as the righteous spinster; in such company to continue to knit until death was not a bad occupation. Vive la tricoteuse!

When my nerves are worn out as they will be soon I shall not ask Dr Armstrong for help as Patrick Hughes portrayed him. We must not joke about the nerves of nerve-specialists, Miss Christie! One of the first essentials for nerves is, I understand, to relax. Do relax, Dr Armstrong!

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John Little tried very hard to be an ex-C.I.D. officer and enjoyed himself. We did too though his factual manner hardly corresponded to the boredom of the rest of the company.

How excellently women novelists think they understand men and how they dislike their own sex. Do you know I do not think Miss Christie liked the character of Vera Claythorne, and Mary Norris seemed to share her opinion. Nevertheless, she might have been at least conventionally feminine and shown some horror as one after another of the company was murdered. Mark you, at the end when—but enough! I grant that she did at one moment seem genuinely afraid.

John Izod's Philip Lombard, the military man of crime, was clearly bored. Apart from not being certain of his words he had no definite character that he wanted to portray.

Neville Evans as Sir Lawrence Wargrove, High Court Judge, should have Miss Christie's approval. Clearly he had the true valuation of the character around him. He looked and spoke comfortably as their superior, and I warmly endorse his behaviour towards them.

The lighting has greatly improved in the King George's Hall, Missions to Seamen, because of the noble efforts of John Rogers. Sandra Rogers provided a decor that was colourful but still the difficulties of the small stage have not been solved.

Colin MacCallum Stewart produced the play and I am grateful to him for this initial warning of how to avoid being murdered.