

# A Tomb with a View

A comedy thriller by Norman Robbins  
Performed in February 1986  
Produced by Evelyn Stoodley

## Grave humour could make you fit laughing

FARINGDON Community Dramatic Society celebrated its 80th production last weekend in A Tomb With A View.

Produced by Evelyn Stoodley, this archly-black comedy thriller, wittily penned by Norman Robbins, was so over-the-top one wonders only that FADS, not known for demure discretion, has not discovered it before.

It concerns post-mortem activities of the immediate family and household of Septimus Tomb after his will is read.

All, it seems, have personal problems, mostly lethal. Head of the family - but destined to lose it - is eldest son Lucien, played by Dave Headey, a madder-than-usual scientist who operates from his laboratory in the East Wing.

"Man-about-the-house" is bossy sister Emily, Brenda Keith-Walker, while another Monica, Carole White is, to put it mildly, a raving nymphomaniac.

Putting in a stage appearance from time to time is the presumably harmless but completely barmy brother Marcus - Nigel Murrin. He is persuaded to wear his best suit for the will-reading but usually declaims Shakespeare's immortal lines as Julius Caesar, in full-dress toga, of course. He died murmuring naturally: "Et tu,

As corpses accumulated, she thought her rose-beds were looking rather ragged and "could do with a little more body in them". Eileen Beames excelled in this role.

The first victim had been a lady, novelist, Freda Mountjoy, played by Mary Woodyer to whom the late un lamented Septimus left the bulk of his vast fortune in gratitude for curing his insomnia.

She arrived in the family's bare-shelved library accompanied by her secretary Perry Potter ... a notably heavy role for Shaun Egan's debut but which he handled superbly.

Tim Reeves, convincingly middle-aged for his role as family lawyer and Deirdre Hamley, looking for once absolutely appalling as the family's forbidding housekeeper were totally convincing.

The story-line was vaguely like the Ten Little Niggers, by Agatha Christie. There all semblance ceases. This lot even had a werewolf sibling locked up in the cellars.

Sex, violence, murder ... it was all there. With mayhem aplenty. While it might worry professional shrinks if it ever comes to their notice. I doubt there will be any significant escalation in our local crime-rate.

Brute".

His attendant nurse Anne Franklin, in a subtly developing role, was played by Gail Mander.

Eldest of the family is sister Dora, a gentle slightly fey soul, who fretted more about her garden and home-made wine for chance visitors than the mayhem which soon surrounded her.

Malice aforethought on this scale would reduce perpetrator and victim alike to helpless laughter.

It was that sort of evening. A perfect antidote to world-events and weather. What more could one ask? Except, perhaps, like Oliver Twist. "more of the same."

IVY CURZON

## Dave's Tomb spoof leads to a link-up with the Orkneys

INCREDIBLE though it may seem, the fame of Faringdon Community Centre Dramatic Society has spread as far as The Orkneys - although I doubt whether any visitors from the isles will be attending the society's next production at the Community Theatre this weekend.

The devious route to fame came after Dave Headey placed a spoof notice in Faringdon's What's On.

It offered insincere condolences to the family of Septimus Tomb, of Monument House, near Faringdon, and the hope that friends at the Community Centre would be invited to the will-reading on February 13-15.

Through Faringdon reader Dr Roger Leitch, the announcement appeared in the Country Life section of Punch.

It was then seen by Eric Stockton, of Sanday, Orkney, who, through Andrew Purvis, editor of the Country Life section of Punch, sent his best wishes for success of the Faringdon players

"All good luck - I wish I had the excuse to come to Faringdon to see your all," wrote Mr Stockton, who also sent a picture of the Orkney cast.

The latest Faringdon production a comedy-thriller by Norman Robbins, is being performed tonight, tomorrow and Saturday at 7.30 p.m.

Unable to present their usual autumn production, members are hoping for enthusiastic support on their return.

The play is action-packed, providing laughs and surprises galore.

Action is set in a sinister old library where an equally sinister family gather for the reading of the will of their late father, the extremely rich old man, whose grim-faced, mad-eyed portrait dominates the setting.

To say the family is eccentric is an under-statement - one has werewolf tendencies, one wanders around in a Julius Caesar toga, and a gentle elderly lady plants more than seeds in

with their production of Tomb With a View, which was performed in December 1984 by a drama group in Orkney.

"We had great fun doing it and our two performances were attended by over 150 of our 500 population on this small remote isle," wrote Mr Stockton, who played the part of Lucien Tomb.

flower beds.

Tickets are on sale from F.B. Wood, newsagents, in London Street.

Jack Loftin

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