

Opening Thursday

Opening tomorrow night at the Fine Arts Center will be the last of this season's Tryon Little Theater plays. It is the delightful comedy-mystery, "A Shot in the Dark", by Marcel Achard and adapted by Harry Kurnitz. Directed by Jeanne Hoffman, with Jacque Brown in the leading role of Josefa, Michael Bertelsen, Pam Palmer, Rick Pratt, Lee Miller, Johanna Linch and Chip Kessler, the evening promises to be a delightful one for TLT playgoers.

Here is some information about the adaptor of the play. During the 1950's Harry Kurnitz came to be known as one of the most celebrated wits of Hollywood, New York and the fashionable resorts of Europe where he is equally at home, in consequence, as he puts it, of having become "indentured as a dialog-mixer to a large cinema factory in Culver City" for some fifteen years.

Kurnitz constantly ad-libs stright-faced inventions about his past, such as "When I was writing women's confession stories I was voted the unwed mother of the year by the pulp magazines. All my stories started out 'When I felt this small new life within me...' When Benard MacFadden read them, he would burst into tears." Listeners to stories like these usually burst into laughter.

One of Kurnitz's widely quoted witticisms is his plot for a happy Russian story: "A Communist defects to the West. He escapes. The Soviets murder his family. Then he happily goes back to Russia. That's what he wanted, to get rid of his family."

Born in Philadelphia, and educated there at the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel Institute, he had for a while worked on a newspaper in that city, as second-string book reviewer and music critic

whence some of the background for two of his later works. One of these, "Fast Company", the first story he sold for conversion into a movie, was concerned with the skullduggeries involved in the rare book business. His backstage acquaintance with musical events in Philadelphia was turned to good use later in his lampoon on musicians, "Once More, with Feeling." Kurnitz, incidentally, can knock off a pretty fair cadenza himself on the violin.

In 1938 his break came with the acceptance by Metro of his "Fast Company" story, and his subsequent hiring out to that Hollywood studio on a yearly basis as a film writer. He had a hand in around thirty movie stories in the next fifteen years, and then moved onward, i. e., backward, to New York as a playwright.

His first play was "Reclining Figure", a once-over-lightly treatment of the chicanery and sharp practices of art dealers, that scored a comfortable run in New York in 1954. Four years later he transferred his searching eye to the charlatanism of another field of art, the world of music, and offered Broadway his "Once More, With Feeling", which ran eight months. As Brooks Atkinson, then drama critic of the N. Y. Times, put it, "Give Harry Kurnitz a fraudulent environment, and he settles back and feels at home" — whether it's the field of rare books, rare paintings or rare music.

Kurnitz has tossed off so many paper-back mystery stories that, to keep the market from being flooded with Kurnitz tales, he also has emitted books under the names of Marco Page and Count Pierre Bezhokov — the latter richly described by the publisher as a fabulously rich eccentric and patron of the arts. His hottest sellers "A Shot in the Dark" was Kurnitz's third Broadway play, and his first adaptation, which he undertook to do on commission at a time when he was stuck in the writing of a comedy which he called "White on White." — Reporter

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Green River At Rotary

Problems involving visitors to the Green River in the Green River Cove area in Polk County and potential solutions of these problems will be explained to Rotarians gathering at 12:45 Friday at the Dinner Bell for a luncheon meeting.

The speaker will be Mickey Lewis, Program Coordinator for the Isothermal Planning Commission, and a graduate of North Carolina State University with a major in Forestry.

Whether or not a part of the Green River between I-26 and Lake Adger should become a part of the State National and Scenic River System is a current issue. In the summer thousands of picnickers and campers come to this section of the river and the cove. Some of the visitors ignore the rights of landowners and violate ecological standards. Mr. Lewis and local members of the Green River Advisory Committee have been studying the problems arising from the conduct of the visitors. He will catalogue the problems for the Rotarians and list possible actions to be taken to permit full enjoyment of the locality without undesirable consequences.

Jack Wheaton is in charge of the program.

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Tryon Daily Bulletin, Wed., Apr. 30, 1980

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