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A Comedy of Errors Program

University of Southern Maine Department of Theatre

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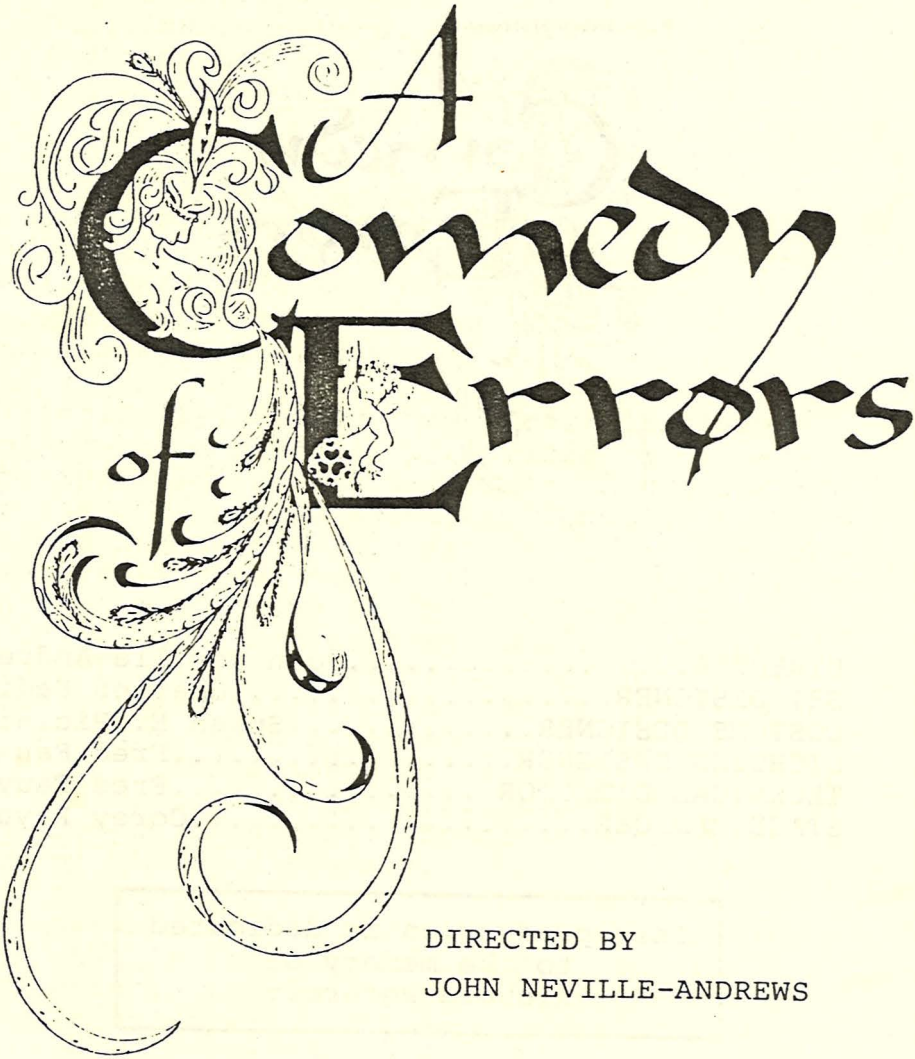
RUSSELL SQUARE PLAYERS

Present **William Shakespeare's**



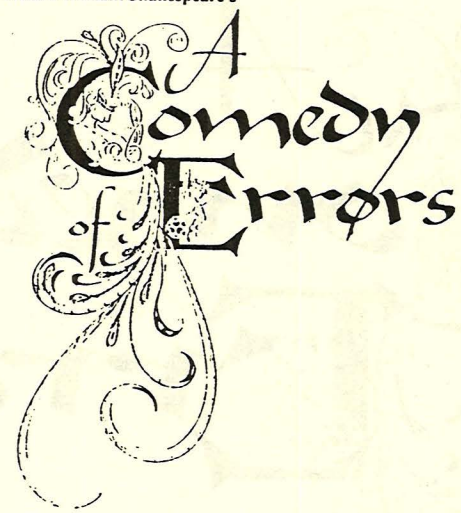
DIRECTED BY

JOHN NEVILLE-ANDREWS

University of Southern Maine

Russell Square Players

Present William Shakespeare's



DIRECTOR.....John Neville-Andrews
SET DESIGNER.....Charles Kading
COSTUME DESIGNER.....Susan E. Picinich
LIGHTING DESIGNER.....Fred Fauver
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....Fred Fauver
STAGE MANAGER.....Corey Raynor

This production is dedicated
to the memory of
Richard Petereit

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"They say this town is full of cozenage;
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
And many such-like liberties of sin"
The Comedy of Errors, I.ii. 97 ff.

This description of ancient Ephesus by Antipholus of Syracuse forms the basis of my directorial concept of The Comedy of Errors. Shakespeare gave Antipholus this speech to draw the audience's attention to the setting and atmosphere of the play.

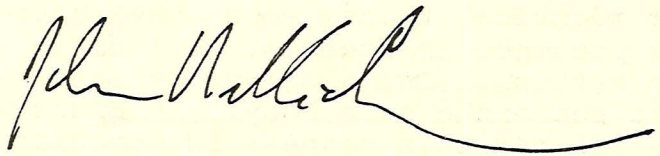
Historically, Ephesus was a city of strange goings-on, a bustling port filled with merchants, traders, and transient characters. In the Acts of the Apostles, Ephesus is described not only as a great center of commerce, but also as the home of the cult of Diana, who in her other guise was Hecate, goddess of witches. The biblical Ephesus was inhabited by evil spirits, magicians, and madmen. Exorcists, like the play's Dr. Pinch, were called in to cure those suffering from demoniac possession. The atmosphere of magic and strange enchantment gives plausibility to the plot of The Comedy of Errors. No bizarre behavior is out of place in Ephesus.

Two sets of identical twins, each unaware of the other's presence in Ephesus, collide in this madcap setting. Two distinct personalities seem to share the same body. In Ephesus the explanation for this madness is demoniac possession. Today we might translate such a splintering of personalities as schizophrenia.

We laugh at the absurdities mistaken identity generates, but Shakespeare challenges our definitions of identity while we enjoy the fun. As each twin is mistaken for the other, we can see how insubstantial our sense of self is - it rests, at least in part, on the way others perceive us.

This potpourri of events and emotions fits snugly into the period in which I have set the play, circa 1913. The entire world was in the midst of great social changes prior to World War I. Intercontinental travel was exposing people to dramatic shifts of time and culture; radically new fashion designs were changing physical appearance and ideas of beauty; Freudian psychology was revolutionizing beliefs about the nature of personality. The rooted sense of identity of the previous century was suddenly lost. People were, metaphorically, in the position of the characters in The Comedy of Errors.

The Comedy of Errors, as I see it, is a story of change, mystery, and magic. Beneath the delightful surface comdey, it is also a story of the rediscovery and rekindling of human relationships. Its blend of romance and farce, tragedy and comedy, makes it a play of considerable depth and enjoyment.



CAST

SOLINUS, Duke of Ephesus.....Jonathan P. Morris
EGEON, a merchant of Syracuse.....Edward T. Moore
ANTIPHOLUS of EPHESUS.....William Reed Temple
-twin brothers, sons to Egeon and Amelia
ANTIPHOLUS of SYRACUSE.....Harold S. Withee
DROMIO of EPHESUS.....Sean Casement
-twin brothers, servants to the two Antipholuses
DROMIO of SYRACUSE.....Christian A. Behr
A MERCHANT.....Robert St. John
SECOND MERCHANT, to whom Angelo is a debtor.....
Daemeon Pratt
ANGELO, a goldsmith.....Geary W. Smith
BALTHAZAR, a merchant.....Steven H. Huss
DOCTOR PINCH, a conjurer.....Glenn Gordon
ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.....
Amy Engelhardt
LUCIANA, sister to Adriana.....Asch Gregory
AMELIA, wife to Egeon.....Carolyn Bailey
COURTESAN.....Kerry Campbell
LUCE, a kitchen wench.....Tamara Kathryn Schmidt
AN OFFICER.....Ian J. Luce
BELLBOY.....Steven H. Huss
A WAITER.....Jacob Schachter
ITALIAN ACTRESS.....Kerry Campbell
DOWAGER BARONESS.....Tamara Kathryn Schmidt
SECRETARY, to the Dowager Baroness.....Sue Rowe
A HOTEL GUEST.....Nancy Elizabeth Nichols
POIRET.....Daemeon Pratt
ARTISE.....Glenn Gordon
AID TO SECOND MERCHANT.....Robert St. John

SETTING

Place: The rear patio and Mahka of a luxury hotel in Ephesus.

Time: Circa 1913

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR.....Mary Ellen O'Hara
ASISTANT STAGE MANAGERS.....Paul Raymond
Catherine Rasco
LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR.....Jude Bernal
SOUND OPERATOR.....Margaret Millard
COSTUMER.....Christenia Kinne
DRESSER.....Pat Levitt
COSTUME SHOP ASSISTANTS.....Kris Hall
Denise Demitre
PROPS MASTER.....Michael Hatch
PROPS ASSISTANT.....Cathy Dudley
CARPENTERS.....Kerry Campbell
Brett Coffin
Cathy Dudley
Meagan Hoff
Daemeon Pratt
Catherine Rasco
Joy Reichert
Paul Raymond
Denise Rideout
ASSISTANT ELECTRICIAN.....Rebecca Szatkowski
BOX OFFICE MANAGER.....Mark A. Dube
BOX OFFICE PERSONNEL.....Eric Bray
Kerry Campbell
Stacey Knight
PUBLICITY.....Dr. Walter Stump
Kate Larlee

COMING TO

RUSSELL SQUARE PLAYERS

HEDDA GABLER

April 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 1988
Curtain: 8:00 p.m.
April 24, 1988 2:00 p.m. Matinee