



'Deathtrap' is lively comedy-thriller

BY PATRICK KELLY
Staff Writer

Jealousy, revenge and murder make for an interesting night out at the theatre. "Deathtrap" captured all the elements of a first rate thriller with a smartly added a touch of humor.

Naturally, since this is a murder mystery details regarding the story line must be kept to a minimum. The play centers around playwright Sydney Bruhl, who is suffering from writers block and feels challenged by his prodigious student.

Bruhl invites his student Clifford Anderson to his house conveniently located in the secluded woods. Predictably, the eerie sounds of a thunderstorm provides the soundtrack. And of course, the visit proves to be fatal. As one can well expect, there are plot twists a-plenty in this play.

It is never said what time period the play is set. However, there are references to the Merv Griffin that would place the show in either the 1970's or the early 1980's. The play has a classic timeless element which hearkened back to the 1930's, especially when the

THE FACTS

Title: "Deathtrap"
Stars: George Hansen, Peg Sheldrick, Gerrit Vooren, Leta Powell Drake and Richard Nielsen
Director: Ina Marlowe
Grade: A
The Skinny: A playwright learns the hard way that there's no such thing as a perfect murder.

play humorously incorporated George Gershwin's "Someone To Watch Over Me" for comic relief.

The structure of Ira Levin's play is quite original. By the second act the play unfolds along with the play that Bruhl is writing.

Levin's other major achievement in the play is the tightly written dialogue. While a great deal of the humorous lines go to Sydney Bruhl, the other characters are put in the spotlight as well.

The characters in the play were played with expertise and savvy by this

small cast. Bruhl was played by George Hansen. Hansen brilliantly plays the melodramatic, pretentious, self-absorbed author.

His aristocratic East Coast accent was most impressive, however somewhat inaudible during a few quick asides to the audience. The foil to Hansen was provided by an enthusiastic performance by Gerrit Vooren as Clifford Anderson, Bruhl's student. Vooren's presence onstage is charismatic without going over the top. Peg Sheldrick brings a sense of realism to the play as Myra Bruhl, Sydney's supportive and practical wife.

Richard Nielsen's supportive role as Bruhl's attorney is also solid. Much of the humor of the play comes from stage and screen veteran Leta Powell Drake. Drake plays the mysterious Helga Ten Dorp a flamboyant Dutch psychic. Her 40 years of dramatic expertise shines through quite humorously.

Not only were the actors extremely skilled in their roles but they were well instructed by director, Ina Marlowe. This chemistry of the cast gave the play a sense of cohesiveness. The actor's movements and actions were very natural and affected only when the scene



RICK TOWNLEY/DN
LETA POWELL DRAKE, George Hansen and Peg Sheldrick (from left) star in the Nebraska Repertory Theater's production of "Deathtrap," which runs through June 19.

required it.

Another impressive element of the production was the set design. The play took place in Bruhl's study at his rustic cottage in Westport, Conn. The walls are decorated in window-cards to plays and numerous swords and firearms — a

decor only Charlton Heston could love. The props and set pieces were attractive, but they did not distract the audience from the action of the play.

An enjoyable venture that keeps the audience thinking and laughing, "Deathtrap" a great accomplishment.

NEBRASKA REPERTORY THEATRE



Deathtrap

A Comic Thriller
by Ira Levin

June 9 - 12 & 15 - 19

7:30 p.m.

June 13 3:00 p.m.

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