

Sunapee students score hit in production of 'Mousetrap'

[A Review]

"The Mousetrap," Agatha Christie's enduring mystery comedy, lost none of its spine-tingling suspense in the Sunapee High School Senior Class's presentation last week.

In typical Christie style, a half-dozen suspicious characters find themselves guests at a pretentious English country house, operated by its young heirs, the Ralstons. As a winter blizzard isolates the manor, and news of a London murder becomes the chief topic of conversation, various clues begin to link the players with a notorious case of many years ago. Three neglected children, who were placed in a bad foster home, a teacher and a judge emerge as victims or suspects.

FIVE STARS GO TO Dennis Hurd whose portrayal of Christopher Wren, the zany,

erratic guest, provided comic relief from the more sedate dialog and nervous action that developed the plot. Bespectacled with his shock of blonde hair always awry, Hurd's ubiquity and his highly irrelevant comments were always good for a laugh.

Kris Engelstad and Bret Wirta also gave fine performances, as the Ralstons, the novice hosts of the manor. Miss Engelstad's breathless and flustered appearance as she tried to be the gracious hostess, harried cook and general maid, escape the persistent attentions of Wren, allay her husband's suspicions and keep her own secret were consistent throughout the play. Wirta, whose role also called for more force and alternating emotions, handled the part with polished ease.

PERT CINDY NICHOLS, as

Miss Caswell, the mystery woman, and Becky Carroll as Mrs. (Judge) Boyle, a born fault-finder, whose demise apparently was no loss to her fellow guests, gave strong impetus to their roles.

Paul Appleby, as the bogus policeman, had to carry much of drama's unfolding with a lot of dialog and came off best when he was engaged in question and answer sessions with individual cast members.

John Gross was ideal as the stolid portly major, alias a detective, his slow speech and heavy gait a nice character touch, and Richard Kelly the unexpected voyager, turned on charm or threat with equal poise.

PAUL DULING, who was the radio voice off stage, the prompter, and assisted with the sound effect, never missed a cue.

The play's impact was heightened by dramatic red and purple lighting at opening curtain, an impressive and tastefully decorated set of an English drawing room with recesses at right and left rear which were ideal for eavesdropping, and a much improved sound system, (thanks to Frank Morse and Ray Cavicchio) which made dialog audible to the far corners of the Rte. 11 gym.

"The Mousetrap," directed by Mrs. Wendell Rude, tied all loose ends together to provide a plausible and happy ending, and the audience showed its appreciation of the hard-working cast by warm applause at the final curtain.

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