

Guild Suspense Play Draws Plaudits

A treat for who-dun-it enthusiasts — and who among us doesn't like a dash of suspense — was "Speaking of Murder," which the Halifax Theatre Arts Guild presented last evening at the Guild Playhouse. Fourth production of TAG's current season, this suspenseful drama was ably directed by H. Leslie Pigot, and may be seen each evening for the remainder of the week.

Setting of the play is the outskirts of New York at the old home of a well-to-do architect and his family. Besides his two children, this group includes an actress who has recently become his second wife. Close to the family circle is the housekeeper-companion, a friend of long standing, and a thirsty and calculating neighbor who suffers occasional twinges of conscience — but not enough to deter her

'Speaking Of Murder' Hit

from the pursuit of her misdemeanors.

Very soon we learned that the friendly scene is not quite as unruffled as it first appears, for there is evidence of sinister forces at work. It didn't take long either to discover the root of the trouble — and therein lies the suspense, for we were kept on edge wondering whether members of the group would recognize and ward off their danger in time.

Again the Guild Players gave us a nicely balanced cast with little to choose from in quality of acting. The big difference was in the demands of the roles, for some of them offered considerable dramatic scope — but on that we won't elaborate further lest the element of suspense is spoiled. Faced with a demanding role which required clear definition, swift mood changes, and clever timing, Muriel White turned in an extremely varied and compelling performance. Com-

menting on others of the cast in order of appearance, we very much liked the work of Douglas Hill as the spirited and misunderstood son — no mean acting chore for a juvenile player. Portraying Wife No. 2, Joan Evans was sincere and charming, while her friendly overtures toward her stepson were especially well handled — casual, spontaneous and infectiously gay.

Another young player who added delightfully to the performance was Donna Lynn Ibsen — this little lady thoroughly enjoyed her play-acting, and her sunny personality simply bounced across the footlights.

Arthur Hartling, as the architect father was sympathetic, and his steady, well-paced portrayal added strength and conviction to the drama. The only character role — and one of the most interesting — was that played by Dora Challice, and her interpretation contained zest, color and touches of wry humor. Dawn Coulter, and

David Rowe, capably rounded out the supporting cast.

At times we felt there were inadequacies in the written dialogue, and the cast didn't bridge these obstacles as we might have hoped. However, they did put across the conflict and mounting suspense very effectively. Some pleasing contrasts were offered, and most always the cast listened and reacted splendidly. Excellent costuming, well arranged lighting and a very convincing construction job of the stage crew added to the performance — which evidently delighted the first night audience judging from their enthusiastic applause.

M. F. M.

Where's The Fire?

Monday
Halifax

10:08 a.m. — 46 MacLean street, overheated washing machine motor.

1:46 p.m. — 313 Dutch Village road, special service. Removing man trapped in car.

3:36 p.m. — 55 Almon street, overheated washing machine motor.

4:36 p.m. — 9½ Black street, smoke escaping from chimney.

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