

1989

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## Hollywood's right here!

In what is billed as Teddington Theatre Club's most ambitious production to date, Hampton Court Theatre is set to present Kaufman and Hart's Hollywood comedy *Once In A Lifetime* from next Saturday.

The theatre is boasting a host of superlatives in the creation of this show, including the largest cast assembled in memory, a set that is designed to take into account a tatty room in New York, a Pullman car and a grand suite in the Hotel Stilton!

As can be seen by the picture of one of the cast, shown here, the wardrobe department has been working overtime to come up with some of the most lavish costumes that the club has ever seen.

Hollywood in Hampton Court promises to be one of the biggest local shows of the year and if you haven't joined the theatre yet, now is a good time.

Tickets are on sale already and cost £4. The show runs from June 17 to 24, nightly at 7.45pm. Ring 01-399 2318 for membership details and 01-898 5295 for the box office.



Teddington Theatre Club's next production at Hampton Court Theatre from June 17th to 24th is the delightfully witty Kaufman and Hart comedy *Once in a Lifetime* with 1. to r. Robin Walters as Rudolph Kammerling, Peter Slater as John Lewis and David Evans as Herman Glogauer. Details of performance times and box office number are in the Briefing column.

## Hollywood at Hampton Court

EVERYTHING in Teddington Theatre Club's next production at Hampton Court Theatre is on the grand scale. Everything in this presentation of Kaufman and Hart's famous Hollywood comedy *Once in a Lifetime* is that much larger than life!

Numerically the cast is the largest assembled by TTC for many a year with names of the best loved actors in the Club - names from the past, names from the present, and names for the future.

The ingenious set being devised by Gordon Edwards has to take into account the many locations depicted in this play: a tatty room in New York; a Pullman car, and the opulent splendour of the gold room, Hotel Stilton, L.A. - and that's only Act one.

To costume this huge cast for the Hollywood of the Twenties, the wardrobe department is being similarly stretched.

Without doubt, this is TTC's most prestigious production for some time. Hollywood comes to Hampton Court! It is the advent of talking pictures. A trio of young hopefuls see their big chance to establish an elocution school with hilarious results.

It is anticipated that the demand for seats will be high for this wonderful show and members are advised to make early bookings. Performances will be Saturday to Saturday June 17th to 24th nightly at 7.45. Tickets at £4 are obtainable from the box office on 01-898 5295. Non members should

## RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

# Cheering throng



ALL THIS week lucky members of Teddington Theatre Club will throng Hampton Court Theatre to marvel at, enjoy and cheer Alison Simon's dazzling large-cast production of *Once in a Lifetime*, the Kaufman and Hart comedy that glorifies Hollywood eccentricity during the Twenties while satirising its prodigality.

But Alison knew that the line between hit and flop is a fine one. The 1979 Broadway revival disappeared without a trace; and Trevor Nunn, who directed the RSC's, mega-hit production in the same year, admitted "there are 100 problems on every page" - a fact which became clear when his version was televised last Christmas to squirming embarrassment.

The bustling immediacy of live performance helps to overcome the play's serious structural faults (the authors lose interest in two-thirds of the central trio half way through). And Gordon Ed-

setting for night club, studio and 'front office', with some of the best Twenties costumes I have ever seen, charms the eye even if plot and dialogue occasionally fall flat.

But the real secret of success is that the director clearly loves the period, the play and its catalogue of vividly absurd characters. And she allows each scene the space and pace to develop its own particular flavour and momentum. Even brief scenes adding local colour - as for example, a couple of electricians passing through - are given their due weight of directorial care and attention.

But, if newspaper space restrictions prevent even-handed reviewing of the talented cast of forty performers, all will agree that Peter Slater gives his finest performance since *Albert* as the owlish booby George, whose reputation for genius rests on repeating the last opinion he heard. Even during frozen moments when yielding the limelight to other performers, his expression and physical attitude continue to be rich in comicality.

Charlotte Daniels as May (with gorgeous coiffure and clothes) and David Lewsey as

warmly appealing that the play's failure to give them a real love scene is disappointing.

Movie mogul Glogauer is a splendidly grey Groucho in David Evans' dynamic performance, and Patty Bottomley's lisp Miss Leighton blossoms into absent minded lovability as soon as she emerges from behind her big desk.

Among the grotesques there are memorable caricatures from Mandy Stenhouse and Irene Palko as queaking starlets in ornate lampshade outfits, Chris Eyres as a gossip columnist, and Heather Godley as a bright-eyed Hollywood mum to Sue Scarrott's blushing hopeful. Steve Bentley gives real bite and presence to the beached writer (a difficult scene written by Kaufman), while Robin Walters painfully thwacks his thigh as a cult German director.

And between scenes Joe Early (with a smart new haircut) and Christopher Palmer, et al, provide musical entertainment to Simon Lane's lilting accompaniment. Despite the oppressive hot weather, if you're a TTC member, don't miss.