

Indy's Beef & Boards' Arsenic and Old Lace is Hilarious

By **Major Jester**

Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre opens the 2013 season with a side splitting classic comedy, *Arsenic and Old Lace*. This popular venue on the northwest side of Indianapolis is also celebrating its 40th Anniversary throughout this year's lineup of quality performances.

Arsenic and Old Lace was written by playwright Joseph Kesselring in 1939 and ran for 1,444 performances from 1941 to 1944. The Beef & Boards production maintains the flavor of the dark humor that has made this play a favorite throughout the years.

Karen Pappas and Geri Weagraff are cast in the roles of the Brewster sisters who have, over the years, assisted old men in the ending of their lonely lives. The Brewster sisters serve the men a lethal potion of elderberry wine laced with arsenic, strychnine and "just a pinch" of cyanide. Pappas and Weagriff play the sisters with humorous deadpan line delivery that will keep you waiting for the next utterance from these sweet little killers.

One of the highlights of *Arsenic and Old Lace* is the character of Teddy Brewster, played to the hilt by Douglas E. Stark. Teddy is the nephew of sisters Abby and Martha. Teddy thinks he is President Theodore Roosevelt. Teddy digs the Panama Canal in the basement, thus providing graves for the lonely old elderberry wine drinking men. Teddy plays a bugle and always yells "Charge!" as he runs upstairs, which is San Juan Hill in Teddy's mind. Stark is hilarious.

David Schmittou is cast as Mortimer Brewster. Mortimer is the only Brewster with any semblance of sanity. Schmittou's portrayal of Mortimer's reaction when he learns of his aunts' dastardly deeds is priceless. Pandemonium follows. Lisa Ermel fills the role of Mortimer's sultry fiancé with style.

Jeff Stockberger is striking as Jonathan Brewster, a maniacal serial killer who shows up with his personal surgeon Dr. Einstein played by Eddie Curry and the body of his latest victim. More pandemonium follows as Jonathon proves that yet another Brewster is totally nuts. Curry's Einstein character adds to the ensuing uproar.

Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre production of *Arsenic and Old Lace* is a well produced, well acted and truly funny stage comedy. The set, lighting, costumes and supporting music are superb. Some slapstick coupled with very funny lines and character development makes this production one you don't want to miss. Go ahead and order a glass of wine with your buffet. Just don't order elderberry wine.

There will be 37 performances of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Call the box office at 317.872.9664 between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. for reservations, or visit the [Beef & Boards website](#) for the complete show schedule and discount availability.