

# The Comedy's Afoot

VLT STAGES A COZY WHODUNNIT ABOUT A MYSTERY WRITER

By Bob Keefer

**W**e all love a good classic mystery, the kind of cozy whodunnit in which one of the biggest challenges of life — solving a murder — becomes, happily, a cerebral problem of mere deduction, in the style of Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie.

Ken Ludwig's 2012 *The Game's Afoot*, which runs at Very Little Theatre through June 22, takes that comfortable genre and winds it into a fast-moving comedy with a touch of farce.

Set at the height of the Great Depression in 1936, the story opens with a play within a play, in which we're introduced to veteran actor William Gillette, played with warm authority here by Michael Walker.

Gillette has made his fortune and built himself a Con-

necticut mansion by acting for decades as Sherlock Holmes in a play he wrote — with, he notes, Arthur Conan Doyle's permission.

As the cast members of *Sherlock Holmes* take their bows, though, a shot rings out — and Gillette collapses on stage, wounded.

Cut to scene two in that Connecticut mansion, a veritable Bat Cave of 1930s-appropriate gadgets. A secret room! An intercom! "This is where God would live if he could afford it," snarks house guest Simon Bright, played here with perfect youthful insouciance by Matt Arscott.

Amid all this techie splendor Gillette, recovering nicely from his bullet wound, is hosting an intimate Christmas Eve party for his fellow *Sherlock* cast members. As the guests arrive, he begins to investigate his own shooting.

Directed by Chris Pinto, *The Game's Afoot* — which has lost its usual subtitle, "Holmes

for the Holidays," this being June — is solid throughout, drawing laughs at every turn for jokes both obvious and subtle.

The dinner party turns more serious when the guests discover that Gillette has also invited the acerbic critic Daria Chase, who has panned every single one of them in print, to the soiree. Chase is played here by Erica Towe, whom we saw just last month as the daughter in *Proof*, which was staged in VLT's smaller Stage Left.

Towe is a wonder as Chase. The role as written seems to describe a graying woman of bitter personality. With her rubbery face and genius for physical comedy, Towe turns the vicious critic into the catalyst for belly laughs.

Tom Wilson is perfectly dry as Felix, and Jen Ferro draws huge laughs as Inspector Goring. The cast also includes Carol Massahos as Martha, William Gillette's mother; Heather Hinz as Madge; and Sabrina Gross as Aggie.

The set, by Michael Walker, is simple but effective, with just enough Art Deco references to give us a sense of time and place. ■

*The Game's Afoot continues June 13-16 and June 20-22 at Very Little Theatre. Tickets at The VLT.com.*

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### LEGAL NOTICES

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR LANE COUNTY IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JEANETTE DARLENE MATHIS, Deceased.** Case No. 19PB04080 **NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS** Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been appointed and has qualified as the personal representative of the estate. All persons having claims against the estate are hereby required to present their claims, with proper vouchers, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, as stated below, to the personal representative at: James Stutz, or the claims may be barred. All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the court, the personal representative, or the attorney for the personal representative. Dated and first published: June 6th, 2019. /s/ Dwight L. Faulhaber, OSB #710584, Attorney for Estate. **PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE:** James Stutz, 1268 C Street, Springfield, OR 97477. T: (541) 579-4534. **ATTORNEY FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE:** Dwight L. Faulhaber, OSB #710584, 912 Lawrence Street, Suite 1, Eugene, OR 97401. Phone: (541) 686-2034. Fax: (541) 686-6252.

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR LANE COUNTY, MARGOT PILLETTE, PLAINTIFF V. CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM HAWKINS, DEFENDANT.** Case No. 19CV36518. **SUMMONS TO: CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM HAWKINS.** You are hereby required to appear and defend the Complaint filed against you in the above-entitled case within thirty (30) days from the date of service of this summons on you. If you fail to appear and defend, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the Complaint. **NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: READ THESE PAPERS CAREFULLY!** You must "appear" in this case or the other side will win auto-

matically. To appear, you must file with the Court a legal paper called a motion or answer. The motion or answer must be given to the court clerk or administrator within thirty (30) days along with the required filing fee. It must be in proper form and have proof of service on the Plaintiff's lawyer, or if the Plaintiff does not have a lawyer, proof of service on the plaintiff. If you have any questions, you should see a lawyer immediately. If you need help in finding a lawyer, you may call the Oregon State Bar's Referral Service at (503) 684-3763, or toll-free in Oregon at (800) 452-7636. Dated and first published June 6th, 2019. Dustin G. Anderson, OSB No. 162074, Attorney & Counselor at Law, LLC, Attorney for Plaintiff, 142 West 8th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401.

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR LANE COUNTY,** Probate Department. In the Matter of the Estate of **MICHAEL DEAN HARRISON, Deceased.** Case No. 19PB03996. **NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS: NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the undersigned has been appointed Personal Representative. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them, with vouchers attached, to the undersigned Personal Representative at 767 Willamette Street, Suite 302, Eugene, Oregon 97401, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, or the claims may be barred. All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or

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Place numbers 1-9 so that each row, column and 3x3 square has each number only once. There is only one solution. Good Luck! Stumped? Visit [sudokuplace.com](http://sudokuplace.com) for a puzzle solver.