

NOTES ON THE PLAY

The original production of this script was developed and performed by The Metropolitan Playhouse of New York. I took Broadhurst's script, completely rewrote twenty of the scenes, and reduced the rest to scenario. Then the actors improvised on the scenario. From the results I created dialogue, which they continued to improvise upon and so forth until we had a play.

Portions of the script were left open and never written down, and the performance of these changed every night. So, I've kept those parts unscripted. When the directions indicate an improvised scene, make it up and let it change each time you do it. Certain other lines which were never set are indicated in brackets, such as [a crack]. Be bold, don't set it, keep trying new ideas. As the rest of the play is very tightly structured, these breathers are really fun for both the performers and the audience.

The script is almost entirely new. I've kept to an old-fashion sound with the language because I think it serves the way the plot is constructed, but from Broadhurst's script fewer than a dozen lines remain anywhere close to the original. So, in creating scenes to fill the improvised gaps, try to make language that supports the style. It adds considerably to the fun of the piece.

Finally, the audience should be let in on the joke, especially by Jones and Cissy. Everything about the play is transparent, no one is going to be surprised at how things unfold. It is the unabashed silliness of it that appeals, and the more you invite the audience to join in on the fun, the better. It relieves them from having to make sophisticated judgments.

By the way, kids love this show. And adults love it more when kids are in the audience.

Enjoy!

"David Zarko, who also directed, has adapted this 1897 three-act farce to demonstrate its original fizz while sharpening its wit with some latter-day references. The result is an endearing and very serviceable farce, one that would be a boon to groups seeking such fare, and far superior to many over-performed comedies currently out there."

--- Backstage

THE CHARACTERS

Ebenezer Goodly - a professor of anatomy, British

Mathilda Goodly - his wife, highly excitable

Minerva - their daughter, an intellectual

Marjorie - their eldest, a romantic

Cissy - their ward, an adventurer, very pretty

Helma - their Nordic maid

Richard Heatherly - Marjorie's fiancé, a scamp

Jones - a salesman, quite nice looking

Dr. Antony Goodly, D.D. - Ebenezer's brother, a bishop, British

Holder - a policeman, Irish

Bigbee - a lunatic