



"The Real Inspector Hound" May 2023



"The Amorous Ambassador" May 2022



“Proof” February 2023

Past Shows

2023 - 2024 Season

Fall Production “Murder Among Friends”

Winter Production “God of Carnage”

Spring Production “Come on, Jeeves”

2022 - 2023 Season

Fall Production “Dracula”

Winter Production “Proof”

Spring Production “The Real Inspector Hound”

Upcoming Production



“Death by Design”

A play written by

Rob Urbinati

“Death by Design” is described as having the superb wit of Noel Coward combined with the sophisticated plotting of Agatha Christie. The show takes place in an English country manor in the 1930’s. A playwright, and his actress wife, flee London and head to their weekend house after a disastrous opening night. Various guests drop in on them, when one of the guests is murdered, it is left to the feisty Irish housekeeper with a macabre interest in homicide, to solve the crime.

Directed

By

Penny Bergman

PENNY BERGMAN is the winner of two EMMY Awards (thirteen nominations) for *LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER* and *ALL MY CHILDREN*. Nominated for nine Director’s Guild of America Awards. Producer, director, writer, stage manager, for more than 1000 film, theater, radio, television and streaming projects. Formerly based in Los Angeles, Tokyo and Honolulu, now back home in NYC.

MFA, Directing. University of Hawai’i at Manoa with Kabuki training from Japan’s National Living Treasure Nakamura Matagoro. Post-Graduate work: Stanford University, UCLA. BA SUNY/BUFFALO.

Origins & History

We were founded on April 18, 1884 by renegades from the Madison Square Dramatic Organization. Bored with its standard diet of turgid Victorian dramas, six chaps met and elected an absent seventh fellow President of their newly anointed enterprise, The Amateur Comedy Club.

Our first production was “One Too Many for Him” on December 19, 1884 at the German Club Rooms in Stapleton, Staten Island. Through three centuries and into a new millennium, we have persisted with an unbroken chain of annual productions through calls to the colors, recessions, depressions and social changes beyond counting. The Amateur Comedy Club is the oldest continuously performing theatrical group in the United States.

The Club occupies two carriage houses on Murray Hill’s Sniffen Court. Our Clubhouse and the Mews are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Club Operations

No tickets are issued to Club events; participation is for members and their invited guests. We operate seasonally, with Major play productions in the fall, winter and spring.

Throughout the season, cocktail gatherings are held, in addition to entertainments produced by the Club’s Special Projects Committee, whose offerings range from one-acts, cabarets and play readings to various social events. The summer months of July and August are devoted to upkeep and maintenance of the Club’s properties and archives and are generally closed to audiences.

Noted Personalities

Prominent New Yorkers who have been members of the Comedy Club include Theodore, Frederick and John Steinway of the piano manufacturing family; Gordon Grant, the marine artist; Christopher La Farge, the architect; Van H. Cartmell, the publisher; Albert Sterner, the painter; and Edward Fales Coward, the theatre critic and playwright.

Women who have graced our stage include Elsie De Wolfe, Lady Mendl, famed for creating the profession of interior decorator, Hope Williams (whom Katharine Hepburn understudied in *Holiday* in the 1920s) and Julie Harris, whose New York debut was at the Club in the 1946 production of *The Devil’s Disciple*.

Audiences love the Amateur Comedy Club

A Black Tie Affair

Last night we were invited to go to the theater as guests of our friends, David and Sarah. It was a very special theatre in that the play was produced and performed by members of the Amateur Comedy Club. Which by the way does not mean that it is a comedy club as we know them today. The group puts on all kinds of plays. So far this all sounds pretty normal but....



The Historic Amateur Comedy Club

First, some history of the ACC – The Amateur Comedy Club was founded on April 18, 1884 by seven gentlemen amateur actors to produce comedies. They were all former members of the Madison Square Dramatic Organization which, as its name suggests, was devoted to the production of dramas, and they wanted a change. The Club's first production took place a year later on February 13, 1885, at the University Club Theater. Events came full circle 25 years later when the "Comedy Club" dropped the requirement that it only produce comedies which, at that time, were usually light and forgettable things. In 1909, some "brash young members" rebelled, and since then the Club has produced comedies, tragedies and musicals. But for that change, the Amateur Comedy Club might have disappeared years ago. Instead, it is now the oldest continuously performing theatrical company in the United States.

The *Clubhouse*... The Club is located in two former carriage houses located in Sniffen Court, a mews on East 36th Street in Manhattan's Murray Hill District. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, they were built in the 1860's and acquired by the Club and adapted to their present configuration in 1918: a theatre downstairs, with a green room, work room, dressing rooms and a kitchen upstairs. A corner of the Green Room serves as the administrator's work space.

Over the years the Club has accumulated a fascinating archive of New York theatre memorabilia, a photographic record of its productions and curious objects, some of which adorn the Green Room where members and guests congregate over coffee at intermissions. There is also carefully preserved an unbroken collection of Amateur Comedy Club playbills dating from the first production in 1885.

So as you could see this wasn't exactly your *normal* theater! Add that to the fact that attendees at Friday night and Saturday night performances are required to wear black tie attire. That was almost the best

part! We got dressed up; Peter in a vintage 1937 tuxedo and I in my usual black on black with a very glam 1930-ish cut velvet duster.

The play, **Ramshackle Inn** was a hilarious comedic murder mystery that took place in a run-down hotel in Maine. The casting was terrific, the member/actors wonderful and the whole evening a delight. After the play, we all went back upstairs to the Green Room where we enjoyed a couple of glasses of champagne.

Peter was of course, in his element, surrounded by women in evening and cocktail dresses and I and every other woman in the place appreciated the male contingency all dapper in tuxedos. Don't men know that women LOVE to see men in tuxedos?

And as true New Yorkers, we left the theatre and hopped on a bus going uptown, Only in New York do you see a tuxedo-clad gentlemen and his date riding a public bus uptown!!

Here are some pictures of the Amateur Comedy Club



Our theatre



Our meeting room where we have parties and meetings. Here is a closing night dinner.



Our kitchen where we cooking food for our events.

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